Nice guy Syndrome Recovery

A realistic and practical guide for transforming a people pleaser into a confident beast!

Daniel Munro

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Nice Guy Recovery self-guided program, the book version (this is an edited and abbreviated transcript from the Nice Guy Recovery online course).

For those of you who do not know me, I am going to introduce myself in this chapter. If you already know my story you can just skip ahead to the next chapter.

I'm Dan Munro, and I call myself a "confidence and integrity coach". I specialize in coaching Nice Guys and people pleasers to become more authentic and confident, especially within the social sphere, by teaching them how to be more honest and be true to their individual core values while increasing their social intelligence and communication skills.

For the first 25 years of my life, I was the *classic* "Nice Guy". I dedicated myself to seeking approval from other people, making them feel happy, and making them like me, while avoiding things like conflict, confrontation, difficult emotions, rejection, risk, and so on. I lived as a performer. I pretended to be something I wasn't to get the best possible reactions and outcomes from people.

Around the age of 25, it really started to become clear to me that this just wasn't *working*. My love life wasn't just terrible; it was non-existent. My friendships were superficial. I was getting walked over and disrespected in the workplace. I just did not *like* myself. I lay awake with anxiety every single night. I had chronic insomnia from the social anxiety that affected me every day.

It took me many years to finally come to the conclusion that maybe being nice to everyone all the time isn't really the *best* way to live. I'd tried it for a long time, but it wasn't working. It was time to try something else.

Fast forward a decade or more…

I have learned that "to be nice" is, in fact, a manipulative game. It's not real. It's something that we use to control other people and it's actually anything but nice. What I've learned is that being honest, assertive, brave, responsible and compassionate, from a *genuine* place, is far healthier, more productive, and actually better for other people.

In this book I am going to teach you all that I've learned about making the transition from a fake people pleaser into an authentically confident person. I will teach you how to speak your mind and actually provide value to other people.

Together, we are going to cover:

- What Nice Guy Syndrome is, and how to know if you have it;
- what type of a Nice Guy (or people pleaser) you are;

- why this kind of behavior happens, and what to do about it;
- what you can do differently, and how you can take practical daily steps that will slowly allow your true self to emerge and to replace your old Nice Guy performance.

The incremental change in behavior will help you to create deep and meaningful connections, build self-respect, and create a life that is right for you. My wish is that, one day, you can look in the mirror and say: “I really like myself!” That is what this book is going to help you with. Be assured, we are going to cover the whole process, one small step at a time!

DEFINITION

In this chapter we are going to cover what is Nice Guy / People Pleaser Syndrome, and how to figure out if you have it.

Here's a short definition of what it means to be a Nice Guy or a people pleaser:

You use nice and pleasing behaviors to manipulate people into feeling certain emotions that make you feel more comfortable and make them like you. You are constantly seeking approval or avoiding disapproval even if it means compromising your own integrity.

Let's cover some of the key factors that Nice Guys and people pleasers have in common. Bear in mind: you probably won't have all of these because - as we'll talk about later - there are different types of Nice Guys and girls, and you are not going to match every type. But if you have a lot of what is on this list, you can be pretty sure that this book is for you.

Dishonesty

I know, a lot of you think of yourselves as honest. I want to challenge that belief. Dishonesty essentially means hiding anything significant or true about yourself.

Think about it.

Do you ever hide your true opinions or feelings for people?
Do you ever hide what you want or what you don't want?
Do you ever not share your preferences?
Do you ever not stand up for what you believe in?
Do you ever let people believe something about you that you know is not true?

This is all dishonesty.

Now, it's not only Nice Guys and people pleasers who are dishonest, but this is one of the key factors in people pleasing: you hide what might not please people.

Covert contracts

Convert contracts happen when you expect other people to behave in a certain way, but you don't tell them *directly* what you are expecting from them. You might even resent them or get frustrated with them for not behaving in a way that you think they should, particularly when it comes to rewarding you for being nice.

You may think that there is a karma-like system in effect, where if I am nice, people should treat me well. You may think to yourself: "I deserve to get back what I am giving". People disappoint

you by not giving you what you want, but you don't actually tell people what you want. You may just imply it with your behavior, and think that there's a set of universal rules that people should follow - rules so obvious that you don't even need to tell them anything. "They should just know", right?

The Chameleon Effect

A chameleon is somebody who changes who they are in order to please their audience. It may manifest as you becoming a different person with each individual that you hang out with. You change your personality, performance, or your persona, in order to suit the current person you're with to make them like and accept you.

You can adapt to different people. You might want to appear as being high-achieving and hard-working with your boss, or a funny guy with your friends. You might want to be perceived as a caring and compassionate guy with your girlfriend. You might want to be perceived as being an intelligent and smart scholar with your parents. In other words, you display roles and virtues that you know they want to see: you adapt to your social environment.

Conflict Avoidance

Conflict avoidance is what nearly all of us people pleasers have in common: we think that we have to prevent and/or fix conflicts. If people are starting to experience emotions that we don't feel comfortable with, we either try to stop that from happening in the first place (e.g. somebody who tells jokes all the time to keep everybody feeling happy), or when it does happen we meditate and fix it. We try to repair the damage. We try to stop people from having a conflict with their own selves, with us, and with each other. We just try to avoid any kind of confrontation.

Fear of Rejection

Now, of course, nearly all humans have a fear of rejection to some extent. But Nice Guys and people pleasers go as far as taking almost no social risks. We won't do something unless there's a high chance of success, socially speaking. If there's even a medium chance of rejection, we will avoid it.

Uncertainty around preferences and principles

This kind of uncertainty especially applies to people that have been behaving fake for a long time. You start to lose track of who you are, what you really stand for, and what you really want. You are so busy trying to be what everyone else wants you to be that you actually forget who you are.

You might not be sure where you stand politically or what you actually want to do with your life. You may not even be sure who you are really attracted to, or who you really want as friends.

You'll just have this overall uncertainty which extends even to your principles, your values, and what you stand for.

Struggle with expressing emotions

You may struggle with expressing emotions, particularly emotions that people call "negative", such as: anger, confusion, disappointment, sadness, stress, anxiety and depression. In essence, any expression of emotion that might make you seem *weak* and in need of fixing, or just something that people might judge you negatively for.

We people pleasers generally try to appear as if we are staying within a narrow band of emotion, one of happiness, calmness, apathy or peace. We don't want to let anyone see that we are feeling anything *strongly*. In fact, most of us suppress our emotions so effectively that we don't even really feel them strongly in the first place.

Sex issues

Sex addiction, obsession with sex, shame about sex, or fear of sex - an undefined feeling of something very dark and painful about what goes on in the bedroom. Maybe you have porn addiction or you use sex workers, maybe you are constantly seeking sex all the time and you treat it like it's a big priority and a really important factor in life.

Maybe you are afraid of sexuality. You sabotage chances for sex to happen. You avoid it. You get very uncomfortable, or you have performance anxiety issues in the bedroom. In general, you just have shame - a sense of wrongness - around sexuality.

And again, these problems are common to a lot of people, not just the Nice Guys and people pleasers, but if you have this and a lot of the other symptoms on this list, then you are probably a Nice Guy.

Combination of anxious and avoidant attachment styles

I won't go into too much detail about these, however the book "Attached" is worth reading if you want to learn more about attachment styles.

In short, an *avoidant*-attachment style is a way of relating to people in which you keep people at an arm's distance because you are scared of letting them "in". You don't want to be vulnerable. You don't want to be intimate.

An *anxious*-attachment style is characterized by a profuse fear of losing people, so you might be scared of losing people you love and you may cling to them. You get needy and stressed about how much people like you.

Nice Guys and people pleasers tend to fluctuate between both of these two attachment styles. If it looks like someone is going to leave us or dislike us, we anxiously try to bring them back in and make them like us again. But, if that person starts to get too close and it feels kind of dangerous (since we are starting to feel vulnerable), we will push them away - we use superficiality, humor, or coldness to prevent them from getting to a point where they can actually hurt our feelings, see us for who we really are, or abandon us. Thus, we fluctuate back and forth between these two.

Sometimes it seems that our attachment style depends on the person we are with: with some people we are anxious, with other people we are avoidant. What we almost never are, is *secure* (i.e. feel safe to totally be ourselves at all times and fear neither rejection or intimacy).

Suppressed rage

You know you have this problem if you occasionally “puke”, which is a Nice Guy term created by Dr. Robert Glover. It refers to the way that all of the resentment, irritation, and annoyance that you have been suppressing bursts out of you at an inappropriate level.

I might be driving my car one day, and suddenly someone cuts me off in traffic and I just lose my mind, start punching the steering wheel and yelling and crying, apparently out of nowhere.

Or an *im*plosion can happen, where you get these great periods of depression and anxiety. It’s like you have imploded inside. There are many psychoanalysts and psychologists (think of Sigmund Freud, Melanie Klein, Aaron Beck, and the list goes on) that believe that depression is rage turned inwards. So, if you hold in a lot of anger, it makes sense that you might occasionally crash into depression.

Sense of Unfairness

Sense of unfairness comes from the idea that you have been “a good person” and yet you are not getting what you “deserve”. It’s the idea that the universe doesn’t seem to *work* properly, that the universe is unfair, and that karma should be rewarding you better than it is.

This belief can even manifest as a sense that you are better than other people and yet they are getting more rewards than you are. It’s an unspecified feeling that things aren’t going *your* way - the way they should. This kind of thinking and feeling is really common in the people pleasing universe.

If you find that a lot of what I described in this chapter sounds like you (and remember, it does not have to be all of them!), then you are probably a Nice Guy and people pleaser. You should keep reading and look deeper in order to understand and deal with this syndrome.

CAUSES

Now let's talk a bit about where people pleasing and Nice Guy syndrome comes from. I am not a therapist and, actually, I am not generally very interested in causes when it comes to solving problems. I am just interested in solutions. So, most of this book will be future-facing. We will be looking to move forward.

But it can help to know why things happen the way they do. If nothing else, just to help you make peace with it, so you can stop blaming yourself for it.

Safety strategy

In a nutshell, pleasing people is a childhood strategy for *safety*. It's a strategy that we came up with before we were teens, often quite early on in our life, possibly even before we went to school. It's a strategy designed to provide us with safety. And safety, at that age, was understood to mean either approval, which gave us pleasure, or avoidance of disapproval, which would otherwise give us pain.

Of course, it's a very immature strategy because it's created by a child. Our brains don't even finish developing until we are in our early 20s, so a strategy created by a child won't be the most efficient. Children will often do something that *seems* to work a few times, and they will believe that it's working well. That is why we see so many adults struggling with people pleasing - they are doing something that a child made up a long time ago, a strategy that does not work very well in the adult world.

Based on working with my coaching clients (click here for more details about my coaching), here are some things that likely happened to you during your childhood that prompted you to create this pleasing strategy. Obviously, not all of these will apply to you, it depends on what kind of childhood you had, but you might hear one of these key markers and go: "Oh yeah, that is when I started trying to impress people" or "That is when I started to hide who I really was":

- **Neglect and emotional distance** - most commonly displayed by the father. You felt that you had to work really hard to get positive attention, approval, and love from one or both of your parents - being yourself wasn't enough. You feared that not being good enough would cause a parent to abandon you.

- **Violence and abuse** - if you felt that getting in trouble was actually going to cause you physical pain, you might have developed a strategy to avoid getting hurt, like walking on eggshells to avoid being noticed.

- **Emotional enmeshment (also known as *emotional incest*)** - this more commonly happens with the mother. You felt as if you were smothered with love, where you were treated more like a partner than a child, and you developed a strategy in order to keep somebody (in this case a parent) at a more comfortable distance.

- **Helicopter parenting** - my younger clients describe this a lot; a constant hovering of parents over you, all the time. This used to create anxiety that you are being watched and in need to constantly be a good person, since it felt like you were on CC-TV, being monitored and judged all the time.

- **Emotional instability in parents** - this happens when one or more parents are unpredictable, at least from the child's perspective. You might have felt like you were walking on eggshells all the time, so you develop a strategy to reduce the unpredictability. You probably tried to keep them emotionally stable with fixing and caretaking, or at least you tried not to provoke their emotional instability by staying under the radar and not adding fuel to the fire.

- **Bullied or being ostracized** - some type of behavior that made you feel like you are part of the out-group, and you either wanted to avoid the bullying or you wanted to enmesh yourself into the in-group. You wanted to get "in" through approval from the leaders of the group.

- **Moving a lot** - when I run workshops for Nice Guys and I ask: "*Who moved schools a lot before the age of 10?"*, many hands in the room always go up. This was certainly the case for me. I had three different schools before I turned seven. I think - and this is just a hypothesis - that the constant moving means that you have to quickly establish a social circle, and you need to get into social circles that are already established. This is really difficult for a child to do, so you have to quickly win approval if you want any friends. People pleasing is a superficial way to get in quickly.

- **Any other abuse or trauma that you felt that pleasing people solved** - it can even be something as horrific as sexual abuse. You may have found that there were ways to please the abuser that put them off from having to go through the other things that they did. It could have also been a way to avoid them.

- **Positive reinforcement** - maybe you got so much approval for performing and putting on a show or making people happy that it just became a drug that you are now addicted to. I think that this might be quite a major cause of Nice Guy Syndrome. Some of my clients say: "My childhood was fine". What they are really saying is: "I got so much approval in childhood that now I yearn for it - I need validation from other people to feel sure of myself."

- **Pressure-parenting** - you know the type: parents that want you to do really well at school, and want you to do really well at sports, and push you to go to the university, and push you to get a really good job, and who constantly ask you "Why don't you have a girlfriend yet?" These parents are constantly trying to mold you into a preferred image based on their own insecurities and failings. It's quite easy to come up with lies that keep

them happy, or to actually achieve the things they want even if they are not really right for you.

And I am sure that there are a lot of other causes. The thing is, all children lie and manipulate. It's a developmental phase that you have to go through. You are learning to *negotiate* in a very immature way. All children have some pain that they are trying to avoid and some pleasure that they are trying to seek. People pleasing is just one of a number of strategies available to achieve these goals.

There are, of course, other strategies that aren't people pleasing. Some people become rebels, others become lone wolves. But people pleasing is the most common way a child deals with uncertain or harmful social environments and situations. In childhood, pleasing is probably not only the most effective, but also the easiest way to cope: "I will just figure out what they like and do that! I will figure out what they don't like and not do that!" It's a very simple strategy.

No six year old boy is thinking: "But will I have integrity? What are the long-term effects of pretending to be someone I'm not?" They don't even understand these concepts. They are just thinking: "How do I make my dad stop shouting? How do I make my mum happy? How do I make the teachers stop picking on me? How do I get some friends?" That is all that they are thinking of and people pleasing is quite a sound and safe strategy for making those things happen.

Arrested development

The problem with continuing to use people pleasing strategies is that they keep us in what's called "arrested development". The natural phase of lying and manipulation that children go through should come to an end if they are developing in a healthy way. When they get past high-school they should start to realize: "Ok, now I can be more genuine and authentic, because the world is a different place."

But Nice Guys and people pleasers stop developing their social strategies around age 13 or so. We hold onto the strategy that we had when we were children. Their development stops when their strategy seems to be working, and they just keep it, even though: a) it wasn't actually working that well in the first place, and b) it starts to work less and less well as time goes on.

By the time we get into adulthood, our childhood strategies basically do not work at all, in terms of achieving the goals of a high quality of life, of enjoying yourself, of good relationships, and all that kind of stuff.

Why do we stick with these outdated strategies?

Because they *seem* to work. It *does* get you approval. It *does* seem to reduce the amount of disapproval you get. Sometimes it does both of these things quite well. It makes people laugh, it

makes your parents proud of you, it makes the bullies leave you alone because you are the funny guy, - whatever it does, it *seems* to “work”.

We don’t really understand what “working” means though, do we? We don’t understand that people pleasing is *not* building our confidence, it’s *not* creating deep and meaningful relationships, it’s *not* leading us towards a career that is actually going to be satisfying. We don’t realize that it’s not working in those key, core functions of life. It’s just working on the surface: it only gets us a superficial, short-term, and ultimately meaningless hit of approval.

And if nothing else, people pleasing behaviors just become a habit. They just become something you do without much thought. Eventually you start telling yourself: “This is who I am. This is my personality”.

You are very vulnerable in those teenage years when you are asking yourself: “Who the hell am I?”, and you are trying to figure it out. It’s very easy for a strategy like this to take the place of your identity. Before you know it, it’s just the only way you know how to relate to other people.

You don’t even consider changing this because you think: “This is the only way I can survive.” In fact, you don’t even think that consciously, you just do it all the time. It’s like somebody who has been living in the same city since they were born, and it never even occurs to them to move.

We quickly develop two kinds of beliefs that keep this behavior going. One is: *I need to do this to feel safe*, and the second is: *it’s “good” for me to be like this*.

We get a lot of approval for being a people pleaser, and in those rare times when we stand up for ourselves or ask for what we want only to get rejected or receive disapproval, we get this feedback from ourselves: “Actually, everyone wants me to be this way and it gets me what I want, *sort of*, and I don’t know any other way, and I feel unsafe when I don’t do it. So, why would I even think of changing it?”

Well, for those of you reading this book, you have already figured it out that maybe there *is* a reason that you need to change your people pleasing behavior. Maybe. And this usually happens in your mid 20s or onwards. You hit a crisis point where you slowly started to realize: “Damn, this isn’t actually working very well.”

ARE YOU A NICE GUY?

This chapter will help you identify whether or not you are a classic people pleaser or Nice Guy. We are going to do that by having a look at your *priorities*. The priorities I am about to list are those of Nice Guys, so if you identify with two thirds or more of these, you can be pretty sure that you are a people pleaser.

- **Keeping the peace > Confrontation.** Moderating and mediating, trying to keep everyone happy, calm and agreeable, rather than standing up for yourself and creating a conflict.

- **Getting a good reaction > Sharing your true feelings.** If you have to choose between saying something that people will react to in a way that you are emotionally comfortable with, versus sharing true feelings which will get a bad reaction, you choose the emotionally comfortable one.

- **Being liked by people > Expressing your true opinions.** If you are in a situation where your opinion will make people dislike you, you'd prefer that they like you, so you hide or moderate your opinion.

- **Comfort > Delayed gratification.** You generally take the path of least resistance in life, the one that *feels* better, as opposed to one that feels risky even if it's what's right for you in the long term.

- **Self-sacrifice > Self-service or receiving.** You are quite happy to give and burn yourself out and hurt yourself to make other lives better, however you don't like that being done *for* you. You try to meet somebody else's needs before you meet your own.

- **Mediation and peacekeeping > Allowing conflict to take place.** If you see other people having a conflict, you will step in and try to reduce that conflict rather than just letting it happen and trusting them to resolve it successfully.

- **Easy sexual release and pleasure > Deeper, more meaningful connection.** A classic example is somebody using porn instead of going out and meeting people and dating. Looking for that easy way to get the release rather than having to go through with actually connecting deeply with someone.

- **Waiting for people to approach you > You approach people**. Effortless socializing instead of risking rejection. Friendships and relationships just come into your life instead of you actually approaching someone, presenting yourself to them, and having to risk rejection. Nice Guy/people pleasers often end up in friendships and relationships with people who just walked into their life. You don't really choose them, they chose you.

- **Good reputation > Standing up for what's right (going against the majority).** You have a great reputation - you are known as a great guy, a good person - however, you are not standing up for what you believe in because it would go against what the majority and hurt your reputation.

- **Being "easy-going" > Having integrity.** You look at yourself in the mirror (metaphorically speaking) and, rather than being proud of yourself for being real, true, and for standing up for what you believe in even if it makes people uncomfortable, you feel good about being an easy-going person around whom people feel relaxed and comfortable.

- **Choosing to meet online > Meeting in person.** This is a modern addition to the Nice Guy Syndrome. You prefer online contact since you get the time to think through what you write and how you present yourself. You can use little emojis, you can hide behind the screen, and you can avoid being in face to face situations where you must think of things to say on the spot and risk upsetting someone without being able to fix it.

- **Double-standards > Consistency.** You will treat other people differently to how you treat yourself. Often, you will treat others better than you treat yourself. One way to look at it is: you do unto others what you would not want others to do unto you. You might help people and fix them and interfere with their emotions all the time, but you don't like receiving help, you don't like people trying to fix you, and you don't like people telling you how to feel.

- **Identifying as "a Nice Guy" > Being true to your beliefs.** You may even call yourself a people pleaser. Any type of label that indicates that you created an identity out of being nice and therefore prioritize that identity over being truthful.

Of course, there are probably more points that I could add to that list, but that's enough to get you started. In your heart of hearts, when you are being true with yourself about your behavior: *what do you prioritize?*

If you find that many or most of the above-mentioned points describe your thoughts, attitudes, beliefs and - especially - your *behavior*, you are very likely to be suffering from Nice Guy Syndrome.

WHY SHOULD YOU ADDRESS THIS?

This chapter is meant to help you realize that some of the problems in your life are related to being a Nice Guy or a people pleaser. I will help you identify these problems and how to overcome them.

This chapter is also for anybody who is not yet fully convinced that people pleasing is a bad thing. Hopefully, this chapter will help you link some of the people pleasing behaviors with some of the areas in your life that are not going so well.

Loneliness

Nice Guy Syndrome is all about *fear* and *control*. It's about the fear of abandonment, the fear of rejection, and the fear of intimacy (fear of people getting too close). It prevents a genuine connection from happening because we are always trying to make people like us and keep them in a pleasurable emotional state, which means we need to be fake most of the time since, if we are real, they are inevitably going to have a range of emotions around us, and we fear that this will cause us to be rejected.

Because we are not truthful, we don't let people have a range of emotions around us, and we cannot create deep connections. This is why even people pleasers who have been married for decades still don't feel deeply connected to their partners. A number of my coaching clients have friends and relationships that have gone on for many years, and yet they still aren't fully honest in those relationships.

Emotional Shame

Emotional shame is the idea of *wrongness* being attached to any normal and natural human emotions. For people pleasers, these are often emotions like anxiety, anger, disgust, depression, confusion... pretty much any emotion that isn't happiness, calmness or unaffectedness.

Since you have shame attached to these emotions, you can develop quite severe pathology; it can really hurt your mind trying to suppress natural human emotions. Since you are permitting yourself to experience only a tiny range of emotions, you end up emotionally numb.

You simply cannot suppress all your emotions and expect a healthy outcome. You can end up becoming quite depressed. You can end up losing motivation, not wanting to live anymore, and all of this simply because you are not allowing yourself to *feel*, which means, really, not allowing yourself to *live*.

Exhaustion and Stress from Acting

It's hard work to be a people pleaser. You have to put on this performance *all the time*. And if you change your behavior like a chameleon depending on a situation and people around you, then you have to remember all the different personas that you use for each person in your life. That's a lot of personas to remember. If they are all in the same room at the same time, you have to keep up with the balancing act.

You are constantly hypervigilant about what everyone is thinking and feeling about you. You are constantly worrying. You are trying really hard to be liked. It is *exhausting*. A lot of you will have chronic anxiety, a lot of you will have sleep problems, a lot of you will struggle with your weight due to stress-eating. A lot of you will feel really depressed and down all the time simply because you are burning yourself out every time you are in a social situation.

Imposter Syndrome

Yet another syndrome! Imposter Syndrome consists of the feeling that you are going to be caught out for being a fraud. It's the fear that anything good that people think about you is based on an act, and one day it's all going to come crashing down.

Now, to be fair, it's probably justifiable to have this concern as a Nice Guy because you *are* acting. And yes, at some point it could unravel, you could get caught being the fake person that you are being. But of course, constantly worrying about this means that you have to be double-checking everything, overthinking things all the time, constantly watching people to see how they are reacting, constantly hiding things, and worrying if you are going to get found out. Again, very exhausting and stressful.

Confusion about Who You Really Are

There's a type of acting called "method acting" where the actor pretends to be the character even when they are not filming or are not on stage - they just keep the act going to stay in character. Studies have indicated that actors who do this too intensely, and for too long, permanently take on traits from the character that they are pretending to be - they actually become that character a bit, perhaps even for the rest of their lives.

Nice Guys are no different. We put on a performance for so long that after a few decades, or even just a few years, we start to forget the original person who is putting on the performance, and we actually become the character we are pretending to be. This is why a lot of people pleasers think of themselves as "honest": it's because they have been living a lie for so long that they assume that it must be the truth.

Unsatisfying or Unhealthy Sex Life

There is a lot of sexual shame involved in people pleasing and Nice Guy Syndrome. We often see the worst of the syndrome come out when we are in romantic relationships. We have a lot of shame around sex as a culture, and this shame is doubled for people pleasers.

It may be that you find sex really anxiety-provoking. Maybe you have performance issues. Perhaps you are constantly worried about how well you are performing for the other person and you make it all about their pleasure. Perhaps you are really worried about how they are perceiving you.

Or you have an obsession with sex, and you cannot stop fantasising about it. Whenever you date someone, all that you can think about is when it's going to become sexual. Perhaps you feel like the concept of sex just takes up an unhealthy amount of bandwidth in your life.

Mediocre Career

Having a career or job that you are good at but you don't like is a classic situation for people pleasers. We tend to gravitate towards things that get approval, and that's of course things that we are good at. We tend to stick with things that we are really competent in, that we find easy. Especially if it's something that we find easy to learn and get better at quickly. And we tend to avoid things that are difficult, things that people don't care about, or things that are going to take us a long time to learn.

Because of this, we tend to get into a job or a career simply because we have a good skill set in that particular area, but this is not the same as enjoying our job. Sure, you might enjoy the approval and praise that you get from being good at a given job, but the way to figure out if you really love this job is to ask yourself: "Would I do it for free?"

If the answer is "Yes", ask yourself why would you stay? Is it because you really love the job or is it because it's a great source of approval?

And if the answer is "No", then you have to ask yourself why you are keeping the job in the first place when you could probably get a better one.

Bottling Up Anger, Resentment or even Hate

The suppression of dark and "negative" emotions constantly, over a period of time, toxifies your psyche. You may start to develop screwed up ideas and beliefs because of emotions that you keep suppressing.

You might, for example, have resentment towards women, or you might hate people of a different race. You might self-loathe, or you might have bitterness about the world and about people.

This is a “death from a thousand small wounds”. Every time you have been upset or bothered by something and you suppressed it, never letting it out through expression, you added to this toxic ball of hate that is building in you. As you can imagine, this does not lead to the most enjoyable life for you or others around you.

Binging and Addictions

Porn. Online shopping. Sugar. Netflix. Gaming. Drinking and drugs. Addiction is anything that you find yourself doing a lot even though you know that it’s unhealthy - a compulsive behavior that you are perhaps engaging in every day, or at least you feel like you can’t stop yourself from doing. You may have to justify to yourself your compulsive behaviors, or at least you have to talk yourself into it because you know that it’s wrong for you.

This is usually the symptom or a consequence of not dealing with “negative” emotions. All that stress, anger, and confusion that you are not expressing and dealing with properly subverts into a cortisol-stress system that you feel the need to get relief from. This means that you are trying to trigger *dopamine*, which comes primarily from engaging in short-term pleasure activities.

This, of course, leads to a lot of long-term problems. If, for example, you are binging on porn, it’s going to affect your ability to perform in the bedroom, affect your ability and your motivation to create romantic relationships, and give you really screwed up beliefs around sex and people you are attracted to. Generally, it spirals downwards in terms of your social life, and this is basically true for every type of binging or addiction.

Resentment About Life

A growing frustration with life as a whole. Perhaps you hold the idea that things are unfairly stacked against you, that you are kind of “targeted” and are being bullied by the universe. Maybe you believe that things are just not going the way they *should* for you. You might even develop specific conspiracy theories that elite groups are out to get you.

This kind of thinking can build up really inaccurate beliefs around the way the world works, a sense of resentment, and a need for vengeance. You might find yourself taking this out on people in subtle, passive-aggressive ways: punishing them, and punishing yourself, for not getting what you deserve.

As you can imagine, over the years it only gets worse, until eventually you become the kind of person who’s really destructive, e.g. as a parent, taking all of your insecurities out on your kids. It comes up from the buildup of a lifetime of feeling that things are “unfair”, and all simply because you did not go for what you wanted *properly*.

Mistreating Loved Ones

People pleasers tend to treat those close to them worse than those far away. So, basically, if you are in the inner circle of a Nice Guy, like being a close personal friend, partner or a family member, there is a good chance that you are going to be treated worse than a total stranger or a vague acquaintance at work.

When a Nice Guy or a people pleaser feels safe with someone, they generally dismiss the need to keep pleasing them, and instead focus on the others with whom they do not yet feel so safe with, like strangers, or their boss. If you are treating those closest to you - who treat you the best and love you the most - worse than you treat strangers, surely you can see that something's wrong there.

Breaching Your Own Values

And last but not the least, you let *yourself* down. You breach your own values. You don't live with integrity. You are constantly doing something that you would not want done to you. You often have a double standard where you treat people in such a way that you would not want them to treat you. You often breach what you want and go against what you believe in order to please other people. And this makes it very hard to look in the mirror and like who you see because you are constantly disrespecting yourself.

You've got to understand: *all of your self-worth issues have nothing to do with anyone else*.

It might have started that way. Maybe you had a really discouraging and abusive parent, or a narcissistic sibling, or you were bullied in school. Sure, somebody else *started* this, but you are the one who *keeps it going* by disrespecting yourself through breaching your integrity just to please other people. Out of all the things we have talked about, this one's got to be the worst. If you can stop doing this, you will discover self-confidence.

WHAT TYPE OF NICE GUY ARE YOU?

Now, let us figure out what type of a Nice Guy you are. This will help you determine which areas you need to focus on for your recovery, and which areas you can safely ignore. It will also help you see that the concept of “being a Nice Guy” exists on a spectrum: it consists of different personality traits, and each person is slightly different.

Essentially, this concept can be plotted on two different axes: *external vs internal locus of control*, which I will explain in a minute, and *extrovert vs introvert*.

“Locus of control” refers to the place where you think the control in your life is located. If you have an *internal* locus of control, you generally believe that *you* control everything (or most of the things), and if you have an *external* locus of control, you generally believe that everything is controlled by *something outside of you* - you are like a victim to it. This makes a big difference as to what type of Nice Guy you are going to be.

So you can be:

1. an extrovert with an internal locus of control (the Controller type)
2. an extrovert with an external locus of control (the Performer type)
3. an introvert with an internal locus of control (the Inner Critic type)
4. an introvert with an external locus of control (the Wallflower type)

These make up the four main types of Nice Guys. I have given names to each of these four variations, and I will explain each in more detail.

You’ll probably find that you identify with being more than one of these types, or you may find that you identify as having some of the traits in each of the four categories. What you are going to be looking for is the one category that you *most* align with. It may even be two of them, a major and a minor.

What you are looking for is the type that describes your most common behaviors and attitudes that you hold most of the time or in the most significant situations. You might even find that you mix up the types depending on whom you are with. Still, there should be one type that comes through as your “default”. That is the one that you are looking for in this chapter.

The Performer

This is an *extrovert* with an *external* locus of control: they are an extroverted person and they believe that the control for their comfort and happiness is outside of themselves. So, the Performer is someone who highlights their strengths and puts on a show to gain approval from the outside world (the external source of control) while hiding their weaknesses from that external source.

The core belief is: *I must be impressive. I must be approved of. I must be validated to be a good person. I must have other people like me to be a good person.*

Some of the things that you frequently experience:

- Pressure to achieve, succeed and perform all the time, especially around the people that you are unfamiliar with
- Compulsion to constantly entertain, e.g. to be funny, even when it's not appropriate
- Anxiety when you are not being noticed and recognized, or when you are not at the center of attention - a need for constant attention and approval
- Getting high from entertaining and getting approval

Some of the common problems that you have:

- Burnout
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- People using you for their entertainment
- Overcommitting yourself since you can't say "no", and since you always want to impress people
- "Shiny Object Syndrome"; you never really finish something because you are always picking up the next new thing to get started with
- Superficial relationships. No real intimate connections. You may have a lot of friends, but only very few people with whom you can be truly yourself

Things that you may commonly do:

- Show off, especially with things that you are good at
- Helping and giving advice without being asked
- Always performing, making people laugh, telling stories, being very interesting and at the center of social attention
- Pushing yourself to succeed, often to the point of exhaustion
- Constantly competing to be the best, trying to win all the time, trying to impress other people with your achievements
- Hiding pain behind false positivity (or sarcasm). You make it look like you are ok with everything all the time

The Controller

This type is an *extrovert* who has an *internal* locus of control, so they are extroverted, and they believe that they control everything. The controller is a manipulator who uses psychological techniques and tactics to adapt to what people like in order to control them.

The core belief is: *I must act differently with each different person and give them what they want in order to make them like me. The results in my life are completely up to me.*

The frequent feelings that you are likely to experience:

- Hypersensitive to how people feel

- Hypervigilant to what people are going through all the time
- Resentment and a sense of unfairness, especially if you are ever rejected
- Worry that your reputation will be ruined if people see you in a way that you do not want to be seen
- Needy for love and for sex, but you also don't want people to get too close. So, you want validation, but you do not want to let people in, so you avoid intimacy
- Vulnerable and unsafe when you are not socially in control: if you are, for example, around a more dominant person interrupting you, or if the group disagrees with your ideas

Common problems:

- Flakiness, you have people lose interest in you over time because your original control over them starts to lose its grip
- You have a fluctuating motivation to socialize, every now and then you just can't be bothered doing it because it's just too much effort having to manipulate people all the time
- You might find yourself disrespected or distrusted because people can see through the controlling tactics that you are using, and they find it hard to think of you as being genuine
- You may have a sex addiction or other addictions where you try to control your feelings with unhealthy behaviours
- Frustration with your lack of ability when things aren't "going right"

Classic actions of a controller:

- Getting into the pick-up artist industry, learning to control how people feel about you, trying to sleep around as much as possible, and trying to get validation through sex
- Indirect displays of attraction or emotion. So, you might tell someone that you like their dress as a way of telling them that you are attracted to them. Or, you might tell someone that you disagree with their idea, and that is actually your way of telling them that you do not like them
- Engaging in the "Chameleon Effect": you change who you are depending on who you are around, constantly adjusting to your audience.
- Imitating the person you are with, such as replicating their vocal characteristics, their vocabulary, what they are interested in, and molding yourself to fit their expectations
- Passive-aggressive techniques to get people to do what you want. For example, sulking

The Wallflower

This is an *introvert* who has an *external* locus of control. Basically, a shy person who believes they must not upset anyone else.

Their core belief is: *I must avoid disapproval by avoiding being noticed at all. The less one is noticed, the less likely one is to get disapproved of. I can't be controversial or otherwise I will get humiliated, hated, and abandoned. Stay quiet and fly under the radar.*

Feelings that you may often have:

- Chronic anxiety and shyness
- An urge towards isolation and introversion
- Loneliness - even when you are in a group, you feel like you are all by yourself
- Frustration for not being able to express yourself clearly, or not being listened to, or being ignored and interrupted
- Depression coming in and out of your life
- Constantly worrying about being put in the spotlight. Fear of being called out or caught in a lie, fear of attracting all of the attention, e.g. fear of public speaking

Common problems:

- You are stuck with your social circle - you follow whoever takes you as a friend, even if they are a bad fit or toxic. You might end up attracting narcissists or people that you just don't enjoy that much simply because they let you hang around
- Constant overthinking and worrying what other people are thinking and feeling, specifically about you. You may even experience irrational paranoia and assume that everyone is thinking about you and judging you all the time
- A feeling of being mentally blocked: unable to speak up, unable to share your ideas. You find that there is no room in a conversation for you, and things move on before you have your turn to speak
- Stuck on the sidelines - socially, an observer rather than a participant

Actions you are likely to take:

- What I call "Green Light syndrome" - you wait passively to be led, you wait to be encouraged, asked, or given permission before you take action. You never, or very rarely, take any initiative
- Even when you have stuff to say, you are listening much more than you talk
- You distract yourself during social events, maybe scrolling through social media on your phone, or you watch the TV at the pub. You do anything to take you away from that anxiety that you have about being out in public
- You will attend social events just to fit in, but you won't really participate. You just show up to get a quantity of events under your sleeve
- You back down during disagreements or anything that might get controversial or confrontational. You find yourself choking up. You are very avoidant of confrontation and you play it down to avoid being noticed. You might even talk yourself out of confrontations; you talk yourself into believing that you agree with something when really you do not

The Inner Critic

And finally, we have the *introvert* who has the *internal* locus of control. This is a judgmental introvert who beats themselves up all the time for any social failures.

The core belief is: *There is something wrong with me; a deep, toxic thing that I'm ashamed of. I am incomplete, I am probably unlovable, I am broken. I am fundamentally different to everyone else, a freak.*

Frequent feelings:

- Self loathing and constant not-good-enough sensations
- Confusion about why life is so hard and so seemingly unfair
- Hopelessness and powerlessness
- Loneliness when alone
- Deep sadness and a sense of unfairness, as if you have been dealt an unfair deal, a bad hand, and disadvantage in life
- Overwhelmed by self-analysis

Common problems:

- Chronic depression and even suicidality
- Having no social life, having to invite yourself to things and cling to others, being left alone if you don't
- Unable to take compliments and receive any praise from other people. Finding it hard to believe that other people would like you
- No close connections, or people try to be close to you but you cannot let them in
- A sense of uphill battle, like everything is harder for you than it should be
- Trapped inside your head, obsessive compulsive negative thinking and feeling all the time, as if you are in your own little universe, just constantly arguing with yourself

Common actions:

- Often avoidant actions, e.g. you isolate and avoid social situations, you excuse yourself from invitations and opportunities, and push away anyone who might come close
- You might have compulsive behaviors like video games and porn; anything that is isolating and addictive. Anything that keeps you away from most people, and also that keeps you out of your head and numbs you
- Struggling to be present in social situations, being stuck mind-reading people and overthinking. In other words, guessing and assuming what other people are thinking, rather than actually paying attention to what is really being said
- As judgmental of others as you are of yourself. Constantly assessing everyone and comparing if and how they are better or worse than you
- Brooding, daydreaming, getting lost in your thoughts all the time, finding it very hard to be in the real world

As you are reading through this book, try to keep in mind what type of a Nice Guy you are, and what that might mean for your recovery. What are the key things that you will have to focus on as you go through the rest of this book?

Some of the advice that follows will apply to you, and some won't. If you identify what type of a Nice Guy you are, you will be able to clearly identify which changes you need to focus on. You

might even be able to be inspired by some of the strengths present in other types that you are lacking, and maybe that is going to give you some indications as to where you should go next.

Brief promotion

If you like what you've read so far and feel ready to dive deeper into Nice Guy Recovery to become a more masculine, powerful and genuine person, maybe it's time you got in touch with me.

Through group-coaching and 1:1 coaching I help transform people pleasers into authentic and confident people of high value, who enjoy quality social circles, deep and fulfilling relationships, successful careers, and powerful self-worth.

"I don't think you have any idea how influential your coaching was for me. The quickest result was that I learned how to speak to others and say exactly what I need to say, no matter how uncomfortable, making me a lot more relaxed in conversations."
-Timo

I always start with a gift: a no-obligation 1:1 coaching session with me. This is free of charge with no sales pitch or pressure. Just a chance for us to connect and for me to help you make a significant breakthrough. The way I see it, my coaching sells itself - you'll either love it so much you want more or you won't, either way I will just let you decide for yourself.

To apply for one of these invitation-only gifted coaching sessions, please click here to fill out the application form in full detail.
https://theinspirationallifestyle.com/lets-talk/

From there, if we want to keep working together, we can discuss whether you'd be better suited for 1:1 or group-coaching with other Nice Guys in recovery.

"The process was challenging at times in terms of examining and shifting paradigms that were at times difficult to perceive and then let go of. Since engaging Dan, my quality of life has markedly improved. The tools that Dan has helped me with will continue to see my life improve. Worth. Every. Penny. Don't be a dick, just do it!"
-Nick

Or just keep reading and hopefully get some value from this book!

THE RIGHT MINDSET

In this chapter we are going to talk about the key beliefs that you need to cultivate if you want to recover from Nice Guy Syndrome and become a confident, authentic and generous person.

Bear in mind as you read this chapter: you won't be able to just flick a switch and turn new beliefs and mindsets on. You are going to disagree with some of my suggestions quite strongly. That is ok. Think of this chapter as a push to get you thinking about a better way to think, and help you open your mind to the possibility that your current beliefs are not serving you. Think of these new beliefs as something that is not only going to serve you well in the moment, but that is actually gonna make life better for both you and others in the long run.

Put Yourself First

Taking care of yourself *is* taking care of others. *Self-serving* is not the same as *selfishness*. When you take good care of yourself, you are a better person and you are in a better place to take care of others. When you sacrifice yourself for others you are actually a weak and depleted person forcing your help onto them, and that is not what they need you to do. They need you to take good care of yourself first. So, putting yourself first is actually in everyone's best interest.

Truth is Better Than Lies

While your truth may provoke a range of feelings in someone or may be something that they can't quite handle at the moment, it is *accurate* information, which means that they can *use* it. They can make decisions, they can plan, they can decide what they are going to do with you and with their life around you based on information that is true, so it's probably going to be the best decisions that they can make. When you feed them lies and deception, that is what they are basing their decisions on, and it can lead them down a false path: it can lead them to a fake life. If, for example, they think that you like them when you don't, they may make plans around you liking them, and then be disappointed and crushed when they finally realize that you don't and it destroys all their plans. So make sure that people are getting the best information that they possibly can to make decisions, and that information is the truth.

Embrace Being Disliked

It's ok for people to dislike you. Don't stop someone from disliking you. People that you want to have in your life are people that like you whether or not they agree or disagree with you on any given issue. But, people who dislike you are not the kind of people that you need in your life anyway. So there is no reason to put effort into making people like you. Disagreement and dislike are not the same thing. You can allow people to both disagree with you and dislike you, but don't mistake someone disagreeing with you with them disliking you.

Prioritize the Relationship with Yourself

The only relationship that you are in for the rest of your life is the one you have with yourself, so that must be the priority. How do you build a good relationship with yourself? By doing things that make you love yourself, that make you respect yourself, that make you admire yourself.

Behavior that you are *proud* of. That must be the priority over everything else, including and especially behavior that is just to please others.

Alive is Good Enough
You survived everything that has ever happened to you so far, so that not-good-enough story in your head must be a lie. If you were really not good enough you would not be reading this sentence right now because you would be dead. So while you strive to improve, always remember that just making it this far qualifies you as worthy.

Avoid Comparisons with Others
Comparing yourself to other people is both inaccurate and pointless. You don't know what is really shown to you, and you do not know what is happening behind the scenes. You just look at the small slice of someone's life and compare yourself to it without knowing the full person or what is really going on. You don't even know if what you are seeing is really that successful, and even if it is, you don't know about the potential pain in the other areas of their life. And even if they are doing better than you, *so what?* How does that information help you at all? It doesn't, so comparing to others is a pointless measurement.

Always Be More Honest
Honesty is a key to building confidence and connections. Why? Honesty is the removal of shame. It's you expressing yourself boldly. *That* is what makes you proud of yourself. And it builds connections because the only way you can get deep and intimate with someone is if they can really get to know you. And the only way they can do that is if you are being honest. So if you want to be confident and well connected, you must be honest, and this must take priority over the small deceptions and lies that make people temporarily happy.

Say Goodbye to Childhood Strategies
What got you here won't get you there. Whatever childhood strategies helped you survive up until this point must now be put away. Just because it got you up to here, it does not mean that it is going to continue to be successful. In fact, if you are this far into the book, it is because your old strategies haven't been successful or have stopped being successful. Now is the time to use a new strategy, one that isn't something that a scared little child came up with.

Brave, Not Fearless
Bravery is better and more realistic than fearlessness. You have been sitting around waiting to *not* be afraid, uncomfortable, anxious, or terrified. That is *not* going to happen. Fear is a natural human emotion that will occur to you *for the rest of your life*. Bravery is doing something that you are uncomfortable doing, it isn't waiting to be comfortable to do it. So focus on being brave over being fearless, because one can be done and the other one is impossible.

Stop Manipulating
Being "nice" is manipulation. You must allow people to run their own lives without your interference. Being nice is not the same as being genuinely generous, helpful or giving. Being nice is about putting on a performance that makes people like you more and tries to control their

emotions. It is nothing more than manipulation. Stop doing it. Stop telling yourself that you are a good person for doing it, because you are not.

No More Double Standards
You cannot treat people better than you treat yourself. You cannot treat people in a way that you would not want them to treat you. Everything must be equal. So, if you find yourself being really nice to people all the time, but you would resist it if people did that to *you*, then you have to stop doing it. If you find that you treat people with kindness but you are mean to yourself, you have to start treating yourself with kindness.

Avoid Staying Comfortable
Discomfort won't kill you, but endless comfort will. Sure, it may not kill your body, but it will kill your spirit. You will make your life miserable if you try to do the same thing that you have always done all the time. Hell, it's not even that comfortable really, is it? It's just *familiar*. Discomfort is doing something unfamiliar that creates emotions that you find unpleasant, but this is always the admission fee on the path towards greatness.

Quality Over Quantity
Quality is better than quantity, socially speaking. So instead of trying to make everyone like you, look to find the few who love you *for who you are* and allow the rest to dislike you or ignore you. Put it this way: which would you prefer, a hundred superficial friends who do not really care about you or five deep personal friendships with people who would die for you? Choose wisely, because you can't pursue both simultaneously.

Take Action with Permission to Quit
You can always walk away when the discomfort gets too great, so start getting uncomfortable. And particularly, start being more *confrontational*. Start standing up for yourself, saying what you really believe, voicing your opinions, your thoughts, your feelings and anything else that might upset people. But also give yourself permission to leave if the conversation gets too much for you. You never have to stay to the point of being *terrified*, but you should act to the point of being uncomfortable.

Let Them Judge You
Nothing happens if people judge you. Hard to believe, I know, but if you look back you will realize that even when people judged you really negatively, nothing ever really happened to you. You can let judgments happen. People can talk about you behind your back, they can think things about you that are incorrect, they can hate you. Nearly all the time, nothing actually happens when they feel this way about you, so why are you worried about it?

Choose Discomfort Over Misery
Lastly, you have a choice between *discomfort* or *misery*. There is no other choice. So, you can either choose bold, honest acts of integrity that you find uncomfortable - actions that bring emotions up that you don't want to deal with - or you can avoid all of this stuff and keep being fake. If you choose the latter, chances are you will end up with a life in which you do not know

who you really are, your connections with other people are fake or forced, your career sucks, and you just feel like you wasted your life. *That's* misery. Which is worse, really? You have to take short term pain to prevent long term suffering.

THE RIGHT MINDSET

I want to give you a heads up for the upcoming section: you might get upset.

In this section, we are going to challenge the core beliefs that drive Nice Guy Syndrome and people pleasing. Since you might be very attached to some of these beliefs, it might feel quite painful to let go of them. Changing your behavior is about challenging your beliefs. In order for you to change your behavior you are going to have to do things that go against what you currently believe, and that is going to feel uncomfortable.

We might rationally understand that our beliefs are wrong, but emotionally we are still going to feel resistance. You may still feel a pull towards maintaining your old way of living. Keep in mind, as we go through this book, that you would not be here if the old way worked for you. The urge to be a people pleaser and a Nice Guy is not helping you, otherwise you would not be here.

Keep remembering this: *if your life was going well (if those beliefs were serving you), you would not be reading this book, you would be out there enjoying your life.*

So when you feel resistance, notice how that resistance is coming up from your old belief system and not from a helpful place. You are going to feel like your identity is being challenged, but that is not true. Your beliefs are not your identity. The beliefs that I will be challenging in this section are the things you have been conditioned and programmed to believe by other people and by society, without good evidence. These are not beliefs that make up your personality or who you are. They are more like attachments that people have added on *top* of who you are, covering up what you are. We are going to strip these layers away, so that you can go back to who you really are. Authenticity, integrity, core values, the person you wish you were: that's what's *underneath* all these beliefs.

I used to believe all of what we are going to talk about in the following section, and now that I consider myself a confident person who thoroughly enjoys life and finds it easy to connect with people and all that stuff, I look back at those beliefs and I know for sure that they are 100% wrong. It took me many years to change my mind about some of these beliefs, and now I look back at them and wonder how I could have ever believed them for even a second.

I am not asking you to do anything that I haven't done and tested myself. As we go through these beliefs, I want you to think about what behaviors you would need to do in order to challenge the beliefs. How would you need to get out there, try and do things that would go against old beliefs, to test to see if they are still true?

We are going to slowly start transitioning away from talking about what is going on in the *mind* of the Nice Guy, and talking about the *practical actions of recovery*. We are going to touch on some of the more practical changes you can make right away, and then we are going to dive into those deeper, but for now, this section is still mostly focused on the belief system.

Belief #1: “Other people benefit from me being nice”.

This is a pretty common belief, the idea that “what I am doing is good for others”. Why do we believe this? Because we think that if someone gives us approval, or somebody is happy, or we get other positive responses from what we have done, that means that we must have done something good. Positive responses are signs that something good has happened, right?

Getting high

Let me ask you something: if I am high on heroin, I feel good. Does that mean that I am doing a good thing for my long-term future?

Probably not. That feeling that you generate in other people when you are being nice, chemically speaking, is actually very similar to the effects of a narcotic. They are getting high off your behavior: you are *manufacturing* a sense of well-being and happiness in them. Now, while this feeling could be a sign that something is going well for them for their long-term future, the short-term high that you are giving them might actually mean harm in the future. In this chapter, I am going to challenge the idea that a short-term ‘high’ is good for the long-term future of other people.

Have you ever had somebody help you without your permission? Have you ever had somebody force their advice onto you? It doesn’t feel very good when that happens I’ll bet. How do you feel when somebody pushes their niceness into your life? Do you enjoy it? Does it make you a better person in the long run? No, you feel suffocated by it. You feel like you need to defend yourself from it. You feel judged. You feel like the other person looks at you as too weak to handle your own life.

Double standards

One of the ironies of Nice Guys and people pleasers is that the things that we do to others are often things that we hate when they are being done to us. Pushing our niceness onto people and trying to make their life better is a classic example of this. When other people try to make *our* life better we usually feel that they are pressuring us. We feel like they are intervening in our life without our permission. We’d rather that they just stayed away.

Even if the person accepts your help and your forced kindness and niceness, it creates a guilt in them. Now they feel like they owe you something, and - if you are honest with yourself - you often think that they *do* owe you something. You’ve been nice and now they have to be nice back to you. You have caused them to go into debt without even asking for their permission, and you probably want interest on that loan as well. They have to be even *nicer* to you than you were to them. Is that really fair? Is that *good* behavior?

And of course you are being judgmental. When you are nice to people what you are really trying to do is control their emotions. You are trying to make them feel good, *as if they can’t do that on*

their own. As if their happiness and their well-being is up to you, like you are a great hero who is going to save them because they are too weak to figure out their own life. Is that fair of you? Can you not just let somebody figure out how to manage their own emotions? Do you really have to do it for them with your niceness?

Resentment build up

As you are going about your day, forcing your niceness onto people because you think that it is in their best interests, you start to build up resentment. You let people walk all over you, you don't stand up for yourself, and of course, you don't get as much niceness back as you are putting out, and so it feels unfair.

Who pays for this resentment? Is it the people in the outer levels of your life? No, it's the people closest to you. People pleasers are notorious for hurting the people closest to them. Why? Because they feel safe around those people. When you feel safe, your darkness comes out. You have to suppress it the rest of the time. You don't feel safe at work to let it out, maybe you don't feel safe with your less-close-friends, so once you come home to your family and your siblings and your loved ones, all your darkness comes out. You go from being a peasant to a tyrant. Is it "good" that the people who love you the most get the worst version of you and the strangers get the best? Well, that is what "being nice" does. Is that really a benefit to other people?

Creating fragile people

When you hold back your truth, when you refuse to confront someone, when you try to make people feel happy all the time, when you don't let them feel any other emotions, what effect do you think that this is going to have on their long-term future? Are they going to become stronger or weaker from you doing this? The answer should be obvious: you are making them more *fragile*. When you protect someone from the truth and try to protect them from having uncomfortable emotions, they miss out on important experiences and training on how to handle those difficult situations and feelings, and without that training they are less prepared for the real world.

The real world isn't as nice as you are pretending to be. The real world is full of hardship and disappointments and unfairness and bad luck and nasty people, and the only way to survive in the real world is to have training and experience in handling all of that. When you are being really nice to someone they might feel good in the moment, but you are depriving them of the training that they need for dealing with the truth, with people taking their place and being assertive, with people giving them honest feedback and critique, and with all the other things they need to know how to deal with in life.

You feel better about yourself when you make them comfortable and happy, but then you walk away leaving them a more fragile person that somebody else is going to crush. Is that really good behavior on your part?

Putting yourself first

I think the number one belief that Nice Guys need to change is the idea that you need to put other people first; that you have to go and take care of everybody else; that they are too weak to do it on their own; that they *need* you, and that you must sacrifice yourself in order to help them. The truth is, the best thing you can be for other people is becoming somebody who's sorted *themselves* out. Somebody who has all their shit in order. Somebody who is confident, somebody who takes good care of themselves, somebody who has got everything prepared, somebody who prioritizes their own needs, so that nobody else has to do it for them.

If you are in an airplane that is about to crash, the oxygen masks come down and they tell you that you've got to put your *own* one on *first*. Why? Because you cannot help someone else if *you* are suffocating. Well, life is like that: you can't help other people if you are suffocating. If you are depriving yourself of your own needs, in order to try and be nice to other people, nobody wins. They get a weak version of you and you turn them into a weaker person. If you really want to be of benefit to other people, take good care of yourself and leave them alone to manage their own lives.

Now, if they come to you for help, if they ask for your assistance, if they give you permission to give your niceness to them, *still* you must be careful. Make sure that you are not trying to steal the glory from them. Make sure that you always push the responsibility for solving the problem back to them. You can assist them, you can encourage them, you can support them, but don't do it *for* them. Make sure to remember that if somebody is upset it's *their* job to deal with being upset. You can be there with them, but don't solve it for them by being funny or helpful, or distracting them. Let them be upset, just ensure that they are not upset by themselves.

In summary, being nice to other people might give them a short-term high, but in the long-term you are making their life *worse*, not to mention making your own life worse. Don't kid yourself into thinking that your niceness benefits other people. All it does is give them temporary highs. If you really want to benefit other people, put yourself first, take care of your own needs so that nobody else has to, and so that when you do help someone, you are coming from a place of strength.

Belief #2: “There’s nothing wrong with making people happy”.

Key words there being “making” and “happy”. We hold this idea that we can force or manipulate other people into happiness, that this is a good thing to do, and that we are proud of ourselves for doing it.

Good v Bad emotions

Nice Guys and people pleasers tend to separate emotions into two categories: “good” and “bad”. Sometimes you call them positive and negative emotions. Usually, the positive column is pretty small: happy, calm, excited (but not too excited), and pleasantly surprised. There are few feelings that you are allowed to feel and everything else is in the negative category: anger, sadness, disgust, offense, confusion, anxiety, stress… the list goes on and on. Basically, anything that is not happiness is called a “negative” emotion.

Why? Where did you get that from: this idea that there are negative and positive emotions? Sure, there are some feelings that you prefer to feel over others, but do you even know why you prefer them? You don’t notice that some people are quite content with being angry or sad, they seem to have no problem. Why is it that you find those emotions to be negative and unpleasant and other people don’t?

For people pleasers, happiness usually gets the highest ranking in the hierarchy of emotions. Again, you have to ask yourself, why is happiness at the top? Because it “feels good”. Is that a good reason for it to be at the top? Has happiness done the most for you and your life? Is happiness the emotion that has carried through all the tough times? Is happiness the emotion that has got things done, and made progress on your goal? And why are the other emotions at the bottom?

Weakness

Because of this hierarchy, we tend to also label negative emotions, or people that are experiencing negative emotions, as “weakness”. So, if someone even has the emotion, or expresses it in some way, we think of them as “weak”, and we think of ourselves as weak when that happens to us. We worry about being judged as weak by others if they catch us being angry or sad or confused about something.

Of course, because we see things as weakness we automatically assume that there is a need for some sort of correction, we feel that this needs to be fixed in some way or prevented. But why do you think of those emotions as weakness? Is it because there is a sense of losing control? But you do not have any control over your happiness either. So, why is happiness a strong and positive emotion and the other is considered to be negative and weak?

And here is the key question: *Why do you think that it is wrong to have a normal human emotion?*

Emotional manager

There is no other animal on this planet, no other mammal, that has any sense of shame about any emotion. If you have ever played with a pet dog, you will see that they go through the full range of emotions and they don't suppress themselves at all. It's only humans that do this. In fact, you probably have no problem with the dog being emotional. Why do we think that it's bad to have emotion, especially when we can't actually control it as much as we would like to think that we can?

We make it our job to manage everybody's happiness. We decide that: "Happiness is the goal for everyone, and for some reason I am going to put on the crown and make myself the king of emotions and control how everybody feels. I am not even going to let people be sad. I am not going to let people be angry. I am not going to let someone stay confused. I am going to get in there and fix it for them, even without their permission. And, should I mistakenly come to feel one of those emotions myself, I am going to stuff it down into a little box and lock it up and talk myself out of feeling it, and assume that that's a healthy way to live."

Who gave you the job of managing everyone's emotions? It's not a hypothetical question. At some point in your life, someone *did* give you that job. Quite often, Nice Guys come from a home-life that is emotionally unstable. This happens in one of two ways.

Either they come from parents who are people pleasers, so the idea of suppressing the emotion is already in the family culture, or they come from emotionally unstable parents. Maybe one of your parents used to lose control all the time, or you had a parent who was really locked up and cold, and it became your job as a child to make everyone feel good. They literally give you that job.

So, who gave you that job, and do you really still want it? It's exhausting to be in charge of everybody's emotions.

And notice the double standard: you consider yourself to be in charge of *your* emotions, but you do not consider others to be in charge of theirs. It's as if you are somehow superior to them. You think that you can manage yours, but they can't manage theirs, so you conclude "I am going to need to do it for them". Just a little judgmental, perhaps?

You use tricks to control people, don't you? Don't pretend that making other people happy is a "nice" thing to do: it's a *manipulative* thing to do. Maybe you use humor to force them into laughter and happiness. Maybe you use distractions as they are going towards anger or sadness. You break up potential arguments before they happen, you throw people's attention off what is going on, you take them away from the truth, all of which is a form of lying. You cheer up the people that are down, you calm down the people that are too intense. You use rational

arguments to talk people into reason - you talk people into not feeling something, the same way you do it to yourself. You use agreeableness and submission to make someone feel better about themselves, even if you have to be false and compromise your integrity, you are going to make them feel like they are right because that will make them feel happy.

Validation and approval, compliments, recognition… it doesn't matter if it's false, right? As long as it makes the other person happy. And you think that all of this manipulative behavior is good, or that it's a good thing to do, even though if someone manipulated you to this extent, you would be absolutely appalled.

All emotions are equal

You have to let go of the idea that there's a hierarchy of emotion. It's simply not true. All emotions play critical roles in helping us have a high quality of life.

Without sadness we can't process change, we can't grieve, we can't move on and adapt to crises and things being taken away from us. Without anger we don't have assertiveness, we don't have courage, we don't have passion, we can't move forward. How are you supposed to protect yourself or those you love without anger? It's not happiness that makes you stand up for yourself.

Without confusion - one emotion that nearly every client I've ever had is ashamed of - we don't have the requisite inspiration to lean into curiosity. We don't have the ability to learn if we first don't admit that we do not know. If people avoid confusion, they stick with beliefs even if they are wrong. Can you not see how dangerous that is for society and for individuals? Why would you stop someone from being confused, when all they are doing is being humble about the fact that they do not know, which is the truth? We don't really know most things.

When you intervene with people experiencing these emotions, you harm those people. You are doing damage to their long-term quality of life. You are taking away their ability to grieve, their ability to stand up for themselves, and their ability to learn new things. You are taking these things away from them with your little tricks, all because you think if someone's happy they will like you more. Actually, as we have already discussed, that is not even true. You have to allow uncomfortable emotions to occur around you for the benefit of other people. You are not doing them any favors by making them happy. It's not your job, and it's not even the best thing for them anyway.

Emotions are not actions

Now, a lot of you will believe that some emotions are "negative" because you see them aligned with "bad" behaviors. You think that anger and violence always go together. You think of sadness and suicide going together. You think of confusion and failure going together.

Actually, emotion and behavior have a separation between them. Not everyone who is angry is also violent. Not everyone who is sad kills themselves. There are people who can process and react to emotion in quite healthy and helpful ways.

I am angry right now as I am writing this chapter; creative writing is one way that I express anger. With anger, I make content that helps people. How can you say that that is harmful? Don't get me wrong, I *used* to be someone who'd punch a hole in the wall when angry, but punching a hole in the wall wasn't an anger problem, it was a *response to anger* problem, which is different.

Do not blame emotions for your behavior. Just because you have done bad things or other people have done bad things while feeling an emotion, it's not the emotion that made that decision for them. They had other options on how to respond to a given emotion. *It's their decision-making process that is at fault.* The emotion is just a feeling: it's just power, sense, source; it's just the stuff that you can use for good or for evil. In itself, the emotion is neutral.

So you need to assign the blame properly. If someone is behaving badly, it's because they have chosen to, it's not because they are feeling something. Put it this way: psychopaths feel very happy when they hurt people; are you going to suppress being happy because of this?

Acceptance

Just let the emotions happen. Express emotions like a child: "I am angry. I am sad. I don't like that. I don't know what to do". You don't need to explain it to other people. You don't need to justify it. If someone judges you as weak, just walk away from them - you don't need that kind of person in your life.

And stop doing that to others. If someone else says "I am sad", you go "Yeah, I can see why you would be. Do you want a hug?". But you don't say, "Well, you shouldn't be sad because blah blah blah." or "Actually, have you seen this funny video?" You don't do any of that. Just let them be sad. Two people are angry and having an argument? Sit back and watch the show! It's *their* job to sort that out, not yours. Now, if people start getting violent, you might intervene, but until that happens - until the bad behavior really starts to happen - people being emotional is not a problem. Let them settle it.

So, in essence what I am saying in this chapter is: no, it's not good to control the way other people feel. Let them feel what they are feeling, let yourself feel what you are feeling, and focus on controlling your behavioral reaction rather than the feeling itself. Happiness isn't the only helpful emotion.

Belief #3: “The only alternative to being nice is to be a jerk”.

It's the idea that the only other option, the only other way to be, is to basically be a jerk - to be a bad person. Nice Guys and people pleasers have quite black-and-white thinking: it’s all or nothing, it’s yes or no. And so, when they look at themselves as being a nice person, they see there’s only one alternative, and that is to be nasty: to be a bad person; to treat people unkindly, and so on. So, you may think that the only alternative to the qualities that you possess as a nice person, or qualities you associate with niceness, is to be the opposite of that.

False dichotomy

That is why we are often resentful of people who are successful in the areas that we are not, like career and relationships. We assume that they must be “bad people”. They must have done bad, manipulative, and nasty things to get to those results for a simple reason: we think that nice people cannot get those results.

We get this idea that there are these two types of people in the world: there are nice people like us (only a few of them), and then there are many billions of basically selfish, unkind, nasty people out there, getting all the stuff that *we* deserve.

I want to open your mind to the possibility that those people “out there” who are more successful than you, in the areas that you wish to be successful in, aren’t necessarily bad people doing bad things. They may, in fact, be *much* healthier than you! They might have tapped into traits that you currently have shame around. Traits like assertiveness, responsibility, honesty, courage, leadership etc. All these traits do get positive results. You might look at those behaviors as mean or nasty because sometimes they are aggressive, or sometimes people get offended by it. However, maybe you are not seeing it accurately. Maybe you are not seeing that these successful people are living with integrity and that, when someone reacts badly to it, it’s due to the insecurities of a person on the receiving end.

Sure, there are nasty people out there, e.g. psychopaths, that do get the kind of results that you wish you had, but they are actually quite rare. You would find most of the successful people in the world - if you were to sit down and have a chat with them - are quite lovely people. It’s only in your head that they are the bad guys.

The tempting switch

If you think that nice and nasty are the only options, and nice hasn’t worked for you, it is tempting to think about switching. I know that I did. In my mid-twenties, I decided that I’d had enough of being a Nice Guy when it came to dating and women. I decided to be a jerk and see what happened. So I went around being mean and nasty, teasing people and playing all the

games that I saw all other players play, and it kind of worked as it *did* make *some* people more attracted to me.

The problem was: I did not like being *that* guy. It felt even more fake than being a Nice Guy. And afterwards, I felt really bad because now both being nice and being nasty did not work. Neither of them worked. And both of them felt awful. At least by being nice I did not feel so bad about myself for causing harm to others, but I was not getting any results there either. So I started to feel really depressed because I thought: “Whether I am nice or I am nasty, I can’t win”. It took me a long time to think: “Well, maybe there is a third option”. And there was.

The third option

This is a common Nice Guy issue: they don’t see the *third* option. They are locked into black and white thinking. The third option is usually the best of what is available and includes none of the bad stuff. It’s quite often an option that is completely off the spectrum that you are on. Most Nice Guys see only the spectrum of nice to nasty, but what they don’t realize is that *anywhere* on that spectrum is manipulative and fake.

So, what about getting off that spectrum all together? What about being somebody who does not manipulate? Consider becoming somebody who is not obsessed with getting things all the time or getting what they want, and instead focuses on being a good person; focuses on integrity, on being someone they are proud to be.

So, what does this option look like?

You are assertive and you stand up for yourself, but you are also compassionate, you also help other people, and make sure that nobody gets too badly harmed.

You are bold in going for what you want and saying what you mean, but you are also empathetic, you also understand that it will have an effect on other people and you pay attention to that effect, and you try to minimize harm if you can do so without compromising your principles.

You are honest, you say what you think and you do what you want to do, yet you are also respectful. You know that other people are living in this world and they have the right to live as well, so you do your best not to overshadow them or crush them in any way.

You are direct. You do not hide, you do not play games. You go for what you want, you speak your mind, yet you are also able to listen, and receive, and allow other people to have an influence on you (if they are a good influence to have).

You are vulnerable, you are open about your feelings and your insecurities, but you are also non-needy. So nobody can use this information against you because you do not need anybody

else. You are willing to walk away from somebody who does not respond positively to you being vulnerable.

You are a responsible leader. You take the initiative, you decide what you are going to do with your life, but you also know when to follow. You know when somebody else has a better way, so you can follow for a little while.

Powerful honesty

The key concept here is: *powerful honesty*. It's about being bold, vulnerable and courageous with what you say, while also respecting other people. Both nice *and* nasty people don't do this. If you are being powerfully honest, you know that you are being neither nice nor nasty. Nasty people may be judgmental and blunt, but that is not the same as powerful honesty - it's not vulnerable and it's not accurate.

Think of it in this way: the ultimate combination of all the good stuff about being nice and all the good stuff about being nasty put together is that you can confront *and* comfort; you are able to stand up, but you are also able to back down. You can do both, depending on what is genuine for the situation. That's the third option that you haven't tried yet. It's nuanced and more complicated, but certainly worth the extra effort.

Belief #4: “This is who I am”.

This is the idea that your people pleasing and the general Nice Guy persona you inhabit are *genuine* representations of who you are. So, in a sense, you believe that everything you do must be good and that you have no other choice, because this is truly “you”.

Identity prison

This comes from trying to convince yourself that you are genuine since you have *always* behaved in a certain way. You are using the faulty logic here: “If something happens a lot then it must be real”. There’s a line from a *Lamb of God* song that stands out to me:

“You can tell the same lie a thousand times, but it doesn’t get any more true” (Randy Blythe).

What is happening here is that like any other human, you are desperate to have a fixed identity. You are desperate to be able to say “This is me”, and have a clear definition of what that means. You think you need this because it feels secure, it feels like order, and the last thing you want to feel is uncontrolled chaos. For Nice Guys there is nothing more important than being in control, so a fixed identity is ultimately the source of control. It’s saying: “This is my home-base, this is exactly who I am, this is where everything starts”.

The problem - in case it’s not obvious - is that this is like a prison sentence. When I say, “This is who I am”, I back myself into a corner. I put myself under pressure to continue being this way, to live up to the persona that I have told myself and others that I am. Because of this, it's very hard to change when some or all of that persona is harmful to me.

Have you ever wondered why somebody engages in long-term habits that are obviously not good for them and give them no real pleasure? It’s because it’s part of their persona. They feel like, “I have to keep doing this because I have always done it”. This is how to understand someone who repeatedly chooses abusive partners - they are maintaining a victim persona.

Since you feel guilty about being dishonest all the time, eventually your brain comes up with a story to relieve that guilt. It probably developed many years ago, and the story of “This is who I am, I can’t help it”, is a great way of getting rid of the guilt. If I am dishonest and I don’t stand up for myself and I don’t go for what I want, I can just say, “Well, it’s because I am a Nice Guy - I can’t help it, it’s the way I am wired (so therefore it’s not *my* fault)”, and then I don’t have to feel so guilty about being fake and cowardly.

I don’t care if you have been playing this act for *decades* - time served does not make it any more true. If you are hiding who you really are, if you are not saying what you really think, not showing your actual feelings, not going for what you truly want, then it was *never* true. It was always a lie. Just because it is repeated a lot does not make it any more true.

Cognitive biases

You are suffering from a couple of cognitive biases. One is called the *Sunk Cost Fallacy*, which you might be familiar with. We are resistant to letting go of something that we have invested a lot into. We have a skewed belief that the more we invest in something, the bigger the returns will be (no matter what that thing is).

This is why casinos stay in business: people keep losing money because they have already lost a lot of money. They think, “If I just keep going, I should get a big payout. Everything should balance out”. Of course, that is just not how the universe works. Just because you have put decades into people pleasing does not make it any more likely to be successful, in fact it just means you are going downhill, like a person at the casino just gambling away all their money.

And while you are stuck there, unable to cut your losses and just bail on the thing that does not work, you are also being tempted by another fallacy/bias called the *Intermittent Reward System*. I won’t go into details as to why humans are like this, but we respond better to random, surprising and infrequent rewards than we do to consistent rewards. So, if you *occasionally* win *unexpectedly*, you are more likely to become emotionally hooked on that system than a system where you win about half the time and it’s predictable.

How this translates to people pleasing is that *occasionally* people pleasing seems to “work”. Maybe sometimes somebody likes you and you get into a relationship, or you get approval from certain people that you like now and then. Or every now and then you actually get a promotion at work. You get these kinds of rewards *randomly and unexpectedly* and that makes you think, “Oh if I could just repeat that, if I could just do that again, I will get even more rewards”. You think that because you occasionally get rewarded, the system must be working, just not working *consistently*.

But here’s the truth: you are getting these rewards either in spite of doing the people pleasing or they are just flukes, and this is about how likely they are to happen at random. They are not going to happen more often than they already are, and in fact as you get older they’ll occur less often.

Or, even worse, you are getting these rewards on the few times that you actually weren’t people pleasing and then you mistakenly attribute it to people pleasing! You finally stand up for yourself at work and then you get offered the promotion, but your brain goes: “See, people pleasing finally paid off!” Or you finally get drunk enough to express your attraction directly to someone, and they end up liking you and coming home with you, but then you think “Ah, finally, being a Nice Guy paid off!” It was actually the times that you *stopped* doing it that stuff started working for you.

Overall, your issue is that *you are proud of your struggle*. You have to be, because otherwise you’d just probably want to top yourself. So after years or decades of being a people pleaser,

you feel like you have been in the trenches fighting a war and you deserve to get something for this, and so you are going to stick with it. You are loyal to the struggle.

In other words, you are unwilling to admit that all of it has been a big waste of time, other than the lessons learned. You are unwilling to admit that you are playing the victim-hero: the person who loses all the time and yet they are somehow the hero of the story. Your behavior might be consistent, but that does not make it *good*. You can and do consistently lie to yourself and others, day after day, year after year… decade after decade.

Key signs that your current identity is not genuine

You feel exhausted, as if you are putting in a lot of effort all the time. Everything feels like work. You are getting what I call “fool’s gold” results, which means superficial highs but not deeply satisfying rewards. People might like you, but you don’t have deep and intimate relationships. You might get a lot of approval at work, but you are not doing the job you love. You are reading this book: why are you this far into it if you were happy with the results you’d been getting from being a Nice Guy?

Feeling like you can’t win. This is a classic complaint from Nice Guys and people pleasers. “It doesn’t matter whether I do A or B, I just can’t win”. That is because you have an identity that simply does not work in the real world.

Emotionally suppressed. Why would you suppress your genuine emotions if you are being genuine? Why would you suppress any thoughts and feelings if this is truly who you are?

And, in case that was not enough, lack of confidence. Simply put, if you are being authentic, you are going to enjoy being yourself. Your life will suit you well. So, if you are lacking in confidence in any significant way, if there are things you can’t do because you are too scared or too ashamed, then odds are, the way you are being is not genuine.

Forced and fake

Which brings us to ask: if you really were genuine, would you feel this way? Would you feel exhausted and depressed and lonely and confused and lacking in confidence if you’d been genuine all the time? If this was *really* “you”?

Notice how much of what you do is forced and faked. Notice how you are different around unsafe people when compared to people that you feel safe with, or when you are by yourself. Notice any difference in the way you act depending on the audience. Because if you are genuinely being you, there shouldn’t really be a difference. Right? The way you are at home when no one is watching should look exactly the same as when you are in a team meeting. So, if you are changing who you are, depending on the audience, then how can you say “This is really who I am”?

In case it was not clear, if people pleasing hurts you, ruins your confidence, and stops you from getting the results you need, this probably isn't who you really are, or who you are supposed to be. This should be good news! It's time to escape the prison of your false identity.

Belief #5: “I am basically an honest person”.

This is more of a subconscious belief. You probably don’t think these words clearly and consciously very often. It’s just an underlying assumption about yourself that you never really question or maybe you haven’t until you read this book.

Cognitive dissonance

It’s very hard for the brain to handle what is called *cognitive dissonance*, which is two conflicting beliefs appearing at the same time. You can’t comfortably believe in two opposite things at the same time. Usually one of them is going to win because you can’t hold onto that dissonance, that disconnection between two different realities. And there’s one particular dissonance that really affects people pleasers: the idea that a) I am a *good* person and yet b) I am also a *dishonest* person.

It’s very hard for us to think of ourselves as being a good person and also acknowledge that we are lying, that we are deceptive and manipulative - it seems like these kinds of behaviors don’t really fall within the “good person” category very well. So, one of these things has got to go. Either I have to give up on the dream that I am a good person and admit that I am a manipulative liar, or I must convince myself that I am not a liar, i.e. *lie to myself about lying* to maintain my good person identity.

Which one do you think people pleasers are going to choose?

Papering over dishonesty

Most of the clients I work with, at the beginning, might say something like: “I am basically honest” or “I don’t lie”. When we challenge that and dive into various deceptions that they use, they always have a justification like, “Ah, it’s just a little white lie” or “I am just trying to protect their feelings” or “It was inappropriate to speak up at that time”, or “I am trying to be professional” or “I am trying to be polite” or “They would react badly”. They always have a good story for those numerous occasions where they are being dishonest that justify and nullify the lie, so it does not count as dishonesty, because that situation called for it. “I had to do it, I had no choice, and it was actually a good thing to do”.

They have been doing this their whole life, discounting every time they have been dishonest to keep the picture going that they are a good person, a.k.a. an honest person. In this section I want to challenge the idea that you are an honest person.

Now, it does not mean that you are not a good person. But maybe that concept, the identity of being a good person, isn’t something that is very helpful for you to pursue. Maybe “being good” is too high-pressure, too vague, and too impossible to achieve, and maybe being a genuine person, a real person, is something that is a healthier and more realistic goal to pursue. If that’s the goal, if you want to be a person of integrity, you have to first face your lies.

Facing the lies

For me personally, one of the biggest barriers to my recovery was just admitting to the sheer *amount* of my lies. I had a vague idea during my Nice Guy days that not everything I said was completely honest and completely aligned with the facts, and that I didn't share everything I thought, and I didn't share all the important feelings I had. However, I thought of myself as only lying *a little bit*, just to survive.

When we go through the list below, you may come to realize that you lie a *lot*. In fact, some of you, maybe even most of you, will come to realize that in *most* situations you are more dishonest than you are honest. And that is ok, because at least you'll know where you are starting from. At least you'll have a foundation to build on. Obviously, the implication is that if you are very dishonest or even partly dishonest then it's hurting your confidence; it's hurting your ability to connect to people, it's holding you back in your career. This is something that you need to correct.

So,if you're the kind of person who says to themselves (and others) something like: "I am a good person underneath it all, therefore everything I say must somehow be true", I am now going to throw some examples at you, and if you are truly an honest person, then *none* of these examples should apply to you. If even one of them does, then you cannot say that you are 100% honest.

And I will put it out there right now, if you are, indeed, 100% honest, you are the first human in the history of humankind to be that way… congratulations.

So, deep breath: let's go through the examples.

Exaggeration. Adding information to stories you tell, or complaints that you are making, to make it bigger, more interesting, or more convincing. Basically, adding fiction to facts in order to *sell* it more. Either to get approval or to convince someone. That is lying.

Playing down your successes to appear more humble. Brushing off compliments and rewards and playing it down like it was easier than it was. Or, you pretend as if you did not work as hard as you had to, or you dismiss it as just "having good luck". This kind of false modesty is a form of lying.

The Chameleon Effect. We've talked about it before: changing your personality to suit the audience. Adjusting who you are in a conscious way to better suit the person you are with. Now, of course, we all adjust a little bit to the people we are with because they affect us, that is normal. I am not talking about that. I am talking about the deliberate effort to change who you are so that they will like you more. That is a form of lying.

Being polite. Pretty much being polite at any time is a form of lying, but especially when you don't really mean it. When you say "thank you" but you are not really grateful, when you say

“please” but you actually feel entitled to the thing. When you say “sorry” and yet you don’t feel guilty. These are all lies!

Pretending to agree. Now, this one can be difficult because what we often do as people pleasers is first convince *ourselves* that we agree, and then it actually comes out as being a genuine agreement. A classic way we do this is to say something like: “I can see both sides of the story”. So, we migrate from one side over to the middle, and from there then over to the other position. We start against the person, but we see that this is going to create a conflict, so we do this move of thinking, “I can see it from your point of view too”, and eventually we go to “Yeah, you are probably right”. So, we actually convince ourselves that we agree with people even though deep down we still disagree. That is a form of lying.

Pretending to be interested in someone or what they are saying to avoid hurting their feelings. Basically, showing passion or interest, or any sort of curiosity, towards something that you actually find boring or apathetic, that is a form of lying.

Lying by omission. Keeping thoughts and feelings to yourself, even though they are significant and important and really represent who you are. Now, this is a tough one! Of course you can’t say *everything* you think and everything you feel. You would never get anything else done, there's too much noise in there. But *you know* when you have a *significant* thought or feeling and you don’t say it. If you have a crush on someone at the gym and you never tell them, that is lying. If you strongly disagree with your boss's behavior in a team meeting but you don’t share those thoughts, that is lying. There are certain important things that you keep to yourself, which changes the way people see you. It gives people an inaccurate view of who you really are; makes them believe that you are something that you are not, and you knowingly allow this to happen, so that is lying.

White lies. What is often called white lies are these “little” lies that are used to keep social harmony, to keep the peace. Little things that don’t seem like a big deal to say, but they stop anyone from getting upset. There are a range of these, so many little examples that I won’t go into it. But the little things you say, that you think “Ah, it’s not a big deal to lie about that, it’s not worth the bother”. It’s still lying!

Fake excuses to avoid events and invitations. Pretending to be sick, pretending to be busy, anything else you use to get out of saying “no”, to avoid having to reject somebody. That’s lying.

Allowing someone to believe something about you that you know isn’t true. This is usually in the case of people pleasing, at least, something positive. Like when someone thinks you are better than you actually are in some way and you don’t correct them, you allow them to have that belief about you. For example, maybe they think you suffered more than you actually did in order to get this task done, and you just let them believe that you did suffer rather than saying “Actually, it was really easy and I had fun, so I don’t deserve credit for this”. That’s lying.

Keeping secrets about yourself. You may do this to protect your reputation or the image and the impression that you have with people. Now, keeping secrets for others is confidentialit:, it's respect, and that is not dishonesty. That's you keeping a promise, basically. You said, "I won't tell anyone", and so it's dishonest to tell people. But keeping secrets about *yourself* is different. When you hide truths about yourself in order to make people think that you are something that you are not, that is lying.

You regularly do *something* on that list, at least occasionally, and if you tell yourself that you don't then you are lying to yourself. Don't even bother moving forward with this book if you are going to lie to yourself, don't bother continuing. You have to be honest with *yourself* at the very least if you want to recover from people pleasing and Nice Guy Syndrome. You don't have to tell everybody else everything, you may never get to that level of courage, but at least make sure that what is happening in your mind is honest. Otherwise, how are you supposed to ever express the truth to others?

Belief #6: “I am not judgmental”.

It’s this idea that you're a reasonable, fair, and accurate person; that you view the world in a way that is unbiased and objective, and therefore if you think anything negative about another person or about yourself, you are simply “observing the facts”.

Wrong in two ways

This comes from an underlying belief that is twofold.

Firstly, it’s this idea that “I am good at reading people”. We like to think that we are good at reading people, because we really hope that we are, and we are pretty good at manipulating people so we assume that we must be able to read them quite well. And therefore, if we read them as being bad or negative person, we assume that we must be accurately measuring them.

And then secondly there is this underlying kind of fear, underneath all of that, which is the fear of being “wrong”. We are so afraid of being wrong, so afraid of the consequences of being wrong, that we will force ourselves to believe that we are right. And this particularly applies to our judgments of others. When we make a judgment of another person, we assume that we are accurate and therefore the judgment is correct and not unfair in any way.

Judgment takes many forms

A lot of you will think that you are not judgmental. And yet, if you pay attention you will notice that you compare yourself to others. If, for example, you think of yourself as a “kind” person, well, then some other people must be “unkind”. If you think of yourself as a generous person, then other people must be stingy. If you think that you are a good person, other people must be bad. And of course, the opposite applies: you're at a party and maybe you think the people there “outrank” you socially, and you think that they are “better” than you are: that is a judgment of *them*.

You are constantly assessing and judging people based on tiny, very unreliable pieces of evidence, trying to figure out who is better than you and who is worse. In other words, who is socially more worthy than you are; who is more likely to get approval, you or the other person? and so on. This is a risk assessment. You are trying to figure out who is a risk to you, socially speaking. Who outranks you, who outshines you, who is going to steal the approval that you need.

Even seeing other people as judgmental is being judgmental! How do you know that they are judgmental? And even if they are, who are you to judge?

So, if you think that *you* are *not* judgmental, you are saying that other people *are*, and that in itself is a judgment. There is no definition of non-judgmental that does not actually contradict

itself. We are *all* judgmental, and you have to get your head around this because your inaccurate judgments of others and of yourself hurts you socially and psychologically.

If you take care of other people's emotions - you try to cheer them up when they are sad, you try to calm them down when they are angry etc. - that is being judgmental. You are saying that they are incapable of managing their own emotions without your help. If you help in any way without being asked, that is being judgmental. You are saying: "This person cannot live without me, they need me, they are so fragile and weak that they cannot do things or make decisions for themselves without me swooping in to save them like a hero".

Giving advice, especially unsolicited advice (advice that you were not asked for), is being judgmental. In your head, you think that you are helping people, but what you are really doing is saying: "You do not know how to live as good as I do, so I am going to teach you because you are stupid."

Labeling yourself as "good" or "bad", or labeling others in any way, is judgmental. That should be obvious. If you think of someone as a mean person, that is a judgment. If you think of yourself as a good person, that is a judgment.

Treating people differently, based on any criteria that isn't aligned with your values, is being judgmental. If you give preferential treatment to people from whom you want approval, and not to people you don't seek approval from; if you are kinder to the stranger that you can gain something from than you are to your family or to the homeless person, that is all a manifestation of being judgmental.

Mind reading

One of the most judgmental practices that you will engage in is what I call "mind reading". You will assume that you know what another person is thinking or feeling, and then carry on with that judgment without checking to see if it's true.

This is a classic one that Nice Guys do all the time. It's actually a part of our danger assessment: we are constantly trying to guess what someone else is thinking so we can anticipate their behavior and moderate it or manage it or prevent it in some way to our benefit. It's part of our manipulation package, and you won't believe how often you are wrong. You will think that you are 100% right, that you really can guess what other people are thinking, but all that you are really doing is thinking to yourself and projecting that onto someone else. If you are thinking "that person hates me", it's you thinking that - *you* hate you!

You have projected your own thinking onto others and assumed that it counts as evidence that it's true, but you will find nearly all the time that there is no evidence. On so many occasions, when I am working with a coaching client, they say "Oh, I think that guy hates me", and I ask them for proof, and of course there is none! "Well, they never said that they hate me, they never

punched me, they have never gone behind my back and talked crap about me...” There is almost never any proof.

Key points

Stop helping or advising. Unless somebody asks, and even when they do, you have to be careful.

Do not offer assistance or advice or support or guidance to anybody for an entire month. Just let them live their own lives without your help. See if the whole world falls down or not. Give yourself a chance to watch what happens if people live without you. See that it can be done.

Assume that you know nothing about what other people are thinking and feeling. Assume that their behavior is not something that you are actually good at reading (yet).

Challenge everything. So, if you make an assumption about someone - believing that they are thinking this or feeling that - go and *ask* them if that is true! Try to figure out how often you are actually correct. Get a percentage: I am guaranteeing you, it’s a lower percentage than you currently believe it to be, which is probably about 100%.

The reason we’ve got to challenge our judgmental nature is because it hurts our relationships. We can’t connect to someone unless we know who they really are, and instead we are connecting based on what we *think* they are, which is usually wrong. Also, you are constantly opening the door for comparison with others, and because of Nice Guy insecurities, you are always going to lose. While you will think of yourself as better than some people, you will inevitably find someone better than you. And yet that subjective measure does not even make sense.

What the hell is a good person or a bad person? It’s totally subjective. It’s not helpful to think in that way, or to compare yourself to other people in any way. You have to stop making all judgments, both positive and negative, or at least when you do make them, challenge them, call them out, put an end to them so that you can live in reality and realize that we are all both good and bad. Everybody has good bits and bad bits, weak bits and strong bits, and it all kind of evens out. There’s no point in comparing.

Belief #7: “The Universe Should Be Fair”.

All right, now is the time to address one of the beliefs about how the external world works. One of those key beliefs that Nice Guys particularly adhere to is the idea that the universe should be fair. Fairness is a big deal to people pleasers and they generally don’t accept unfairness. We get very upset by things being unfair, like people being bullied, or the underdog losing, or resources being unevenly allocated, or people getting things without earning it, and so on and so forth. They get really bothered by this, especially when it involves *us* - we feel that we deserve a fair deal, and when that does not happen we get very upset.

The physics of fairness

There’s a belief in Karma underneath this: that good gets rewarded and bad gets punished. And the idea that if we are a good person, we should be getting lots of rewards, especially more so than the people who are bad. Now of course, with such a belief system, disappointment is inevitable. The universe simply is not fair by your standards, and if you haven’t noticed that yet, you should notice it now. Have a look around. Consider your idea of fairness and compare it to the universe – is it the same? Probably not.

There are two concepts in physics that apply here. One is *randomness* and the other is *entropy*. Randomness means that things happen without rhyme or reason, they just occur. They go left when they should have gone right, and so on. This kind of thing happens a lot in the universe - the inexplicable movement of particles. And the other concept is entropy, which is everything fades, everything dies, everything dissolves. The universe is spreading out, so everything eventually falls apart. So, the idea that fairness, a kind of consistent balance of rewards, would exist in a universe with randomness and entropy is *ridiculous*.

What is *your* definition of “fair”?

And of course, there is a problem of fairness being subjective. Each person’s ‘fair’ is different from every other person’s. There’s no objective agreement.

Just look at politics. Look at the differences between the left and right politics and what they think ‘fair’ means. They are so different just between those two massive groups, that you’ll never have agreement in the human population over a definition of fairness that *everyone* feels ok about. That alone will separate everybody, and within each of those political groups, every individual member has a slightly different definition.

Your idea of fairness belongs only to you. You are the only one who has that exact idea. So, the belief that this should be somehow applied to the entire universe is faulty and selfish.

Fairness is harmful

Our belief in fairness often drives a lot of our worst behaviors. There are the behaviors that hurt ourselves, like self-sacrifice, false apologies, vengeance, and anything that we do to re-balance some imagined fairness. It makes us controlling. We try to make things right even though we haven't even done anything wrong, and we've just got this sense that somebody's negative emotions need to be reverted back to positive for the world to be fair.

And then, of course, there is the way we hurt others with this fairness, particularly with *covert contracts*. We think that everybody else knows what fair means, that they all agree with us on what it means, and that they should be living by it, so we don't even need to tell them about it. And of course, when they fail to live by it, we punish them in some way; by being cold towards them, or abandoning them, or being mean to them. Something that balances the scales.

We often think that all of our good behavior comes from a sense of fairness. When we are helping people and giving advice and being nice, we think it's a fair thing that we do. We think we are trying to balance out the good and evil in the universe, when most of the time what we are doing is interfering with other people's lives and they didn't even ask us to. How is that fair?

Can reality be wrong?

Notice a key truth that cannot be denied: Reality is never wrong. Reality *is*. So anything compared to that is either the same as reality or it's wrong. So, if your belief in fairness does not match what happens in reality, reality is not wrong, *you* are.

Take a moment to consider what the word 'fair' means to you. What is fairness? Consider what would happen if you were somehow able to force that onto the world: your particular choice, your flavor of fairness. If you were able to force the world to behave in that way, in accordance with those laws, who would win and who would lose?

If we use an example like the communism idea of fairness, what we see is that the harder you work the less rewards you get, and the lazier you are the more rewards you get. If everyone gets an equal share of all of the rewards, and some people work harder, and some people work less, then obviously you are not going to get a fair distribution of rewards. Now, communism is a great example of an idea about fairness trying to be implemented in the real world. And of course, it just continually does not work.

Another example is capitalism: I might think that it is fair that, because I am a hard worker, I deserve millions of dollars. Where do those millions of dollars come from? *Someone* is paying for it. If I have millions then somebody else out there has very little. The nature of money is that not everyone can be a millionaire. So, if somebody is, then somebody else *really* isn't. For me to be rich, somebody else has to be poor. And my wealth is based largely on luck factors, such as my genetics, upbringing, education, culture and opportunities. How is me being rich fair to the poor people?

When you think of *your* idea of fairness, think who suffers if you get what you want. And then ask yourself: is that really fair?

Fairness is a delusion

It can't exist, it does not exist, it will never exist. It exists only in your mind, and you probably don't even live by it anyway. And *un*fairness is also a delusion: the idea that you are being punished and targeted and bullied by the universe, that you are not getting what you rightfully deserve. The universe has no feelings about you one way or the other. There is no evidence to suggest that the universe even knows of your existence. The universe does not care about us enough to even choose fairness or unfairness.

Fairness is a completely human idea. If animals were able to talk to us, they would tell you that fairness does not make any sense to them. It's predator versus prey, eat or be eaten, natural disasters, nothing's fair. You are lucky to be alive, they'd say. Try to make that last as long as possible. You are going to have heaps of challenges along the way because the universe is basically trying to kill you every chance it can get. That's what entropy is. That is inherently not fair, objectively speaking. We live in an unfair world. You have to get your head around that and be ok with that.

You must understand this "unfairness", this fight for our life that we are in from the day we are born, is what builds our strength. When you *don't* get what you want, that makes you *stronger*. When you get what you want it actually makes you a little bit weaker. It makes you a little bit more comfortable, a little bit more complacent, a little bit more entitled. When you regularly don't get what you want, when things don't always go your way, and when you have hard luck, if you see it the right way, it makes you a stronger person.

I think it was Dale Carnegie that said "the best thing you can do for a child is make sure that they are born into poverty". It's this idea that if you really want to be successful in life, you must have lots of challenges, lots of resistance from the universe to work against and build your strength. So, why you would be *upset* about unfairness is mind-boggling, it's the very thing that is helping you grow.

Focusing on respect

And even if unfairness hurts you and does not help you grow, too bad! There's nothing you can do about it. Luck is beyond you. Fate is beyond your control. You *can* accept it, though. You can understand that unfairness is the fact of life, that you have to fight for your life. You can choose to live by your core principles within that, so that at least you are living by the value of respect.

Respect is different from fairness. Fairness says: everybody should have a good time. Respect says: live and let live. So you let me live, I will let you live. I won't let you interfere with me and you should not let me interfere with you. It's a completely different concept to fairness, but it's

much more realistic. I will control what I can control and I will stop others trying to control me, and I will let people do what they need to do. I will try to stop controlling them as well. That is about as close as you can get to fairness in a human world.

Belief #8: “I can make everyone like me”.

The final limiting belief that we are going to be challenged in this book around people pleasing and Nice Guy Syndrome is the belief that it is possible to be liked by everyone.

Who do you wish liked you?

Now, for some people that really means *everyone*: everyone that they encounter, everyone who hears about them, their reputation behind the scenes - they believe that any person they might possibly come into contact with *could* like them if they just played it right.

And for others it's more specific, it’s about whom you would want to like you - the belief is more that everyone who you would *want* to like you could like you. Maybe you don’t mind some people disliking you, you don’t mind being even hated by some people, so long as they are not people that you are invested in, people that are important to you, or people that have some control over your future, like, say your boss or your partner or the cool guy in your football team.

As ridiculous as the belief seems on paper, it’s one of the ones that we feel is true. We have seen ourselves play the chameleon, we have seen ourselves adjust to anybody and be what they want us to be, so we extrapolated out and assumed we should be able to do that with *everybody*. Right? As long as we know how to do it well, as long as we keep getting better at being a people pleaser, better at being a chameleon, eventually we will be so good at it that we can make *anybody* like us.

Vanilla

It’s pretty much the same as thinking that you can make everyone prefer vanilla ice-cream over any other flavor. And vanilla is a pretty good example, because it’s bland and generic, and everyone *kind of* likes it. Nobody loves it but nobody hates it, generally speaking. And that is where a Nice Guy ends up. They end up being vanilla. They fit into everybody’s palate, becoming something that everybody is willing to eat but nobody would make it their first choice. Nobody *loves* the people pleaser. Nobody loves or prefers the Nice Guy more than others. Well, there are some exceptions, of course, but nobody *hates* them either. They just identify as bland, occupying a safe middle ground.

Think about it for a second. Seven billion-plus people on the planet - that’s seven billion unique preference profiles. Imagine the kind of psychopath, manipulator, and chameleon you’d need to be in order to be able to match each and every one of them. That’s a ridiculous idea. Even the most manipulative conman in the world has some people that they can’t con.

So, the idea that you can make everyone like you is, of course, ridiculous. It’s a total fallacy. And that’s before you even start to consider whether or not it’s a good idea to try to make everyone like you.

The trouble with groups

What about when people get into a group together? Notice how you find that situation more uncomfortable. You are ok with one-to-one interactions, but once it's a group, you start to hide a little bit more and play it down a bit more (unless you are the Performer type, like I was, where you get amped up and put on a show that you hope everyone will enjoy). The reason we get uncomfortable in groups, the reason why so many people pleasers list public speaking as their number one fear, is because it's harder to be a chameleon when everyone is different. We can adjust to one person, but if we have a range of personalities in front of us we find it hard to adjust.

So, even if you are really good at being a chameleon, eventually, you will be in a group situation and it's going to stop working. There's no way that you can present to a group without someone in that group liking you less than someone else does.

Objectively likable

It's also based on the idea that there are some objectively likable traits. People pleasers tend to be agreeable, tend to try to be funny, they tend to try to be interesting, and they tend to try to be helpful, because they think that everybody wants this. But that is actually not true.

There are some people who think that those who are trying to be funny are just attention-seekers. There are people who want to be serious about something and they find it annoying when someone is cracking jokes. I found this out the hard way - I used to always crack jokes when I was in my university lectures, but I later got feedback that some people were really annoyed by me because it distracted them - surprise, they wanted to learn! I thought because they were laughing that I was being funny, and I was, but they'd actually prefer that I shut my mouth.

Even when you are being helpful, some people will see you as kind of suffocating and annoying. Even when you are agreeable, some people will despise your lack of spine. Even when you are being kind, some people will just view it as manipulative. No matter what, there are no objectively desirable traits. Even if a lot of people like a certain trait, there will be some people who absolutely hate it.

And then, of course, if you have arguments against all of these, there is one argument that you can't fight against. There are people that: a) can identify people pleasing, and b) can't stand it.

There are people out there who can see what you are doing and they hate you for it. Even when you are pleasing everybody else, there's someone in the room who can see that you are trying to please everyone else and *that's* the reason they don't like you. Ironically, they might have liked you more if you had self-respect and were just honest. In fact, that is the only way they could like you, or at least respect you.

Why do you want to be liked by everyone?

Have you ever stopped and thought: what is wrong with people disliking me? What is wrong with some of the world, at least, thinking that I am an idiot, or thinking that I am uninteresting, or that I am a pain in the ass that they want to get rid of? Why do you think that it's such a bad thing?

I asked one of my black clients, "If a member of the KKK did not like you, would that bother you?" And he said: No. I said, "OK then, why does *anyone* not liking you bother you?"

Start thinking about what type of person you would be ok with disliking you. Maybe a small child who does not know anything, maybe a member of a bigot group that you don't like, or somebody standing on the politically opposite side from you. Start to think about whom you are ok with not liking you, and ask yourself:

"Why *only* that group? Why is it not ok for people to dislike me *in general*? Especially if that is the right thing for us. If I am being honest and they don't like that, isn't it best that we don't be friends? Isn't it best that we don't spend time together? Why would I want to trick them into spending time with me, when it's such an effort to make them like me? Wouldn't I be better spending my time with somebody who likes me when I don't even try? How am I supposed to find that person if I am trying all the time?"

Do you think that it's objectively good to be "popular"? I am going to give you a list of popular people. See if you can identify the common theme: Robin Williams, the comedian and actor; Chester Bennington, the lead singer of Linkin Park; Chris Benoit, the wrestler; Anthony Bourdain, the chef/food critic; Heath Ledger, actor; Keith Flint, the lead singer from The Prodigy; on and on the list goes.

What do they all have in common? *They all committed suicide.*

If being popular is so great, why did these people kill themselves? They all had vastly different lives, they came from different walks of life, they were all different people, yet they all killed themselves *and* were all *extremely* popular and very well loved. These are not controversial people. These people were almost universally loved by those who knew them. And yet, it seems that this wasn't enough to want to keep living.

Why are you so sure that being popular and liked is the cure to your illness? Have you noticed that even though trying to make everyone like you has actually worked quite well, you still don't feel any better for it? Maybe that is because it's not the cure you are looking for.

Liked by everyone equals loved by no one

The only guaranteed outcome that you are going to get for trying to make everyone like you is that no one will love you for who you really are. If somebody is your friend, they are a friend with

the image that you are putting out rather than your actual self. If somebody sleeps with you, they are sleeping with the seduction rather than you as a person. If someone is in a relationship with you, they love the *idea* of you, rather than the real you. Is that really what you want? Wouldn't you prefer just a few people who loved you unconditionally, and you didn't have to do anything to earn it? You wouldn't have to pretend, you don't have to try, you don't have to be anything that you are not. You can be your worst self, and they'd *still* think you are awesome.

How are you supposed to find those people if you are pretending all the time? They will never see you. The only way these people are going to see you is if you are being yourself, and for that to happen, you have to risk a lot of people disliking you.

PRACTICAL BEHAVIOR CHANGES

In this next section we are going to get into the practical behavioral changes needed to correct people pleasing and recover from Nice Guy Syndrome. So, up until now we have really just been looking at the *mindset* of what you are doing wrong, and now we are going to look at your behavior and how to do it right.

I have broken it down into seven different aspects, and this short introductory chapter can serve as a little reminder, so when you are done with the book you can come back to this specific chapter and give yourself a refresher, every other day or week, whatever is needed to keep you on track.

Upcoming chapters are going to go into each of these themes in more detail. This portion is just a quick summary.

Responsibility - Take complete ownership of your life and your behavior.

Honesty - Always speak your mind, no matter what the cost.

Bravery - Try to take the courageous, uncomfortable path whenever you can.

Decisiveness - If you are going to do something, go all in on it. If you can't do that, don't do it at all.

Leadership - Initiate, go first at every opportunity.

Emotionality - Treat all of your emotions as if they are equally valuable, and use them as resources.

Self-respect - Serve your own needs first, and protect yourself from harm at all times.

Now, let's get into this in more detail…

Preparing for reactions

This section is going to be very much about doing things differently, but before we get into that, I think it's only proper that we first prepare for the reaction to your changed behavior. Because, in general, people will react noticeably to you changing who you are.

Sometimes they react well, and sometimes not so much. You cannot hope to move forward on this journey of honesty and self-discovery in such a way where there won't be any reaction, and where people will not be polarized by the new you. You have to be ready for that to happen and understand that that is a normal, necessary part of the process. And it happens for every one of us, for myself and for the many hundreds of clients that I've helped with this.

The most common reaction

Generally, the most common reaction is a wary, skeptical, slightly surprised reaction that eventually leads into acceptance. People generally feel a bit uncomfortable when someone starts acting differently. They don't know if this is a permanent change, or they don't really understand why someone would change themselves. They are used to seeing you in a certain way, and it's just discomforting for their brain to have to remap and re-profile who you are. Then, once they do that, especially if you're consistent with the change and they see that it's better for everyone, they get on board with it.

So if you can just have patience, most people will get on board with it after they go through a little ruffled period. And there's nothing you need to do other than perhaps, if you like these people, to explain why you're making these changes so that they aren't shocked by the sudden change of behavior.

The best people are going to react with encouragement. Many of you have people in your lives who in some sway wish you would stop people pleasing. They want the best for you, and they want you to have a good life. And even though they might benefit from you being helpful or funny or whatever, they'd still much prefer that you enjoy your life. They don't need you to provide for them in the ways that you do. These are the people to look out for because these are the people that are going to stay with you.

Some of you, unfortunately, might not have any of these people, but most of you will have a couple of best friends, perhaps supportive family members, maybe a good boss, etc., and they will encourage these changes. They may even get involved in the change, maybe they will help call you out and help encourage those changes in behavior actively. Or they just won’t get in the way, and they're rooting for you and cheerleading from the sideline. Watch out for these sorts of people because these people may have seen through your performance, actually like the real you, and therefore are going to support that coming to the forefront. They're likely to be good connections for you in the long run.

However…

Some people want you to stay a Nice Guy

Not everyone is going to be happy with this new you, and not everyone is going to react well. There are going to be people in your life who benefit greatly from you being a people pleaser. They use you, whether they mean to or not. It's just their programming.

There are manipulators and users, and people who cling and leech off nice people. They might be people at your work who are used to offloading stuff on you and treating you like a doormat. You might have a partner who's narcissistic in some way or plays the victim and gets you to fix everything for them, and so on. They may even be people quite close to you, e.g. family, and it will be quite heartbreaking to see some of the people who are going to react badly to these changes.

You gotta keep one thing in mind: Nobody who's good for you - nobody who is healthy, nobody who is the right fit for you, whose connection to you is a good connection for you - is going to react badly.

Who’s good for you?

When you see *ongoing* bad reactions - discouragement, disrespectful attempts to manipulate you back into the way you were, punishments and insults - you will know that these are people who probably are not going to stay in your life, and that's going to be best for you.

Manipulators and people who benefit from you being a doormat are going to try and hold you back from change. They'll gaslight you: they'll try and confuse you about who the real you is. They'll try to intimidate you or invalidate you in some way that will make you doubt these changes and make you feel an urge to go back to the old ways. You must resist these.

These changes that you're about to go through are going to bring out the truth about the people in your life. You probably already have your suspicions. There are likely people in your life that feel like hard work, just being around them may drain you. Perhaps it’s really obvious, or you just suspect that if you were to show them who you really are, you would get a bad reaction.

Now, sometimes you'll be wrong about your suspicions, but sometimes you're going to be right. There are people that you immediately think of that fit the above descriptions. Maybe you have been too weak or too needy in the past to address these problems head on, and these changes that you're about to go through are going to address it.

All rise for the Judge

In general, you'll also start to be judged, which at first will feel uncomfortable. You've spent your whole life trying to avoid being judged negatively, trying to avoid awkwardness and embarrassment and ostracism. And now, your new behavior is going to bring up all that stuff that you've been avoiding.

There are going to be moments in conversation and interactions that feel really weird. When you are being truthful or bold, sometimes it might seem that it creates awkward silence. You may think that you are offending or disappointing somebody. You're going to have to experience (and let other people experience) all those emotions that you've been trying to stop them from having.

People are going to react to the real you and it's going to be a range of reactions. There *will* be positive reactions. Some people are going to love the new you, they're going to be like, “Oh, where was this guy all along?”. But some people are going to react quite badly. Not everybody wants to hear an opinion that's different to their own. Not everybody likes your quirky style of humor. Not everybody can handle a silence that's awkward. You're going to see them react poorly to changes that you are implementing.

Bad reactions mean unhealthy people

One thing you've got to keep in mind no matter who the real you is: a confident, healthy person will *never* punish you for it, and will never treat you badly. So, if punishment or poor treatment happens as a reaction to you trying new behaviors, you need to be clear about the person doing it: they are not healthy, they are not confident. You know that much at least.

Whatever doubts you may have about yourself, whether or not you are really living by your values or if this is the right way of living for you, keep in mind that even if you've got all of it wrong, a good person is not going to treat you badly. If you're being treated badly, you should be very wary about that person, no matter what they say their reasons are. Because not a single good person treats another person badly. It's a simple fact.

Finding yourself

You might start to find things out about yourself that you're uncomfortable with. Maybe you will discover that some people think of you as weird, maybe they think you're too serious, maybe they think you're boring. There might be all sorts of things that are true about you that you've been hiding, and as these truths come out, you will polarize people.

Think about it in terms of having a specific taste for things. Not a lot of people may be into a specific thing, but people that are into it are going to be *really* into it. You know, you might be awkward to 9 out of 10 people, but that one other person is going to think that you're *perfect*. You will just have to hold strong to the commitment to be authentic, and as you find out who the real you is, allow people to have reactions to you and make up their mind about you.

The real you, at least in some situations, is just normal, boring, and simple. You don't have to stand out to be real. In fact, if you're standing out all the time, you're probably putting on an act, it's called being “contrarian”. You'll find that there's a mixture of traits, behaviors, and tastes that make you unique. There are some parts of you that fit into the mainstream, and you're allowed

to be that - you don't have to be special. Wanting to be special is a limiting belief. There will be parts of you that are just boring and normal, right in the middle of the bell curve.

But then, there are also going to be other parts of you that are very unique, features that make you an “outlier”. There may be no one else who does something the way you do, maybe no one even understands it. You must let those parts exist as well. Sometimes you'll feel like you're going against the tide, against the mainstream, against the people around you, against the culture around you. You might find that you have to break rules, even laws, to be true to your values. Sometimes you're going to feel alone.

The most honest person in the room

Often, if you're being very honest, you will be the most honest person in the room. People are generally dishonest. People are generally socially anxious. It's very rare that somebody is boldly honest. You will be a rare person in many social circles.

Sometimes you might be very uncomfortable with the fact that you get a weird reaction: everybody in the room is trying to keep things superficial, and then you come in with some real shit. You are going to polarize people: some people will just move away from you, but you don't need to care about them. What you're looking for is the one person who's like,“Oh, thank god somebody is being honest”. You are looking for another honest person, one like you, and once you find that person, you will spend the rest of the party hanging out with them instead of trying to mingle with everybody.

Let the dust settle

Just allow everybody to resettle on their own. Allow them to let their true feelings about you become known. Give them a couple of months or so to adjust to the new you, and then make your decision about whether you're going to keep them in your life. And remember, it's a very simple decision. If they're encouraging and supportive and you like them as a person, keep them. If they're anything else, let them go. It's really not that complicated.

If somebody does not lift you up, or at least support what you're doing, let them go and choose to be yourself. They're not worth having around. I don't care if you are related to them by blood. I don't care if you've been married to them for 10 years. It doesn't matter. They either treat you well or they don't, that is the only standard you need to know.

Now, bear in mind that you've got to give them the best possible chance to treat you well. Listen to them, explain what you're doing, and try to help them understand the transition you're going through. If they're people who are already close to you, let them know that this is in their best interest, that you're going to stop people pleasing, which might mean temporarily withdrawing some of the help or support or whatever that you've been giving them, but for the long term, you're going to become a confident person. If they don’t respect that - if they're still resistant after you explain it like that - mark their resistance as a red flag.

Get ready to weed that garden

I lost probably 70% of my friends going through this transition. I had a lot of people I called “friends”, but almost none of them were my *real* friends. Nowadays, I've got maybe five real friends, but I can be whatever I want or need to be in front of them. They are totally accepting of who I am. The rest of those people just drifted away. Some of them left violently, you might say - they rejected me, they turned on me - while others just ignored me and moved on, didn't return my calls, or whatever.

And yes, it was painful. There was some grief I had to go through. But, on the other hand, I realized: “Look, if they were right for me, that wouldn't have happened”. The proof is right there, in their behavior. The people who were right for me, stayed. It's as simple as that.

Responsibility

Things are going to get exciting now, as we are going to move fully into the practical element of this book. So, from here on out it is going to be about changing your *behavior*. This means doing new things, or stopping old things, or doing things slightly differently. You can read all the books you want and you can think about things as long as you want, but if you don't change your behavior, you will remain a Nice Guy. You are going to have to *do* things differently, and those things are going to be uncomfortable some of the time. Not as much as you think, but at first they will feel like they are often uncomfortable.

Killing the victim

We are starting with responsibility. I call this "the father of all masculine values", and I think it's the value you must live by before you can do *any* of the other work. You must take responsibility for yourself, and let go of taking upon yourself other people's responsibilities.

Nice Guys have a victim-feel to them. They have a deep, often subconscious identity that I call "the victim-hero", which is essentially *being proud of being a loser*. The victim-hero is a person who sees life as unfair, sees themselves as unfairly treated, as targeted, bullied by the universe, as having it harder than others, and actually proud of that in a warped, weird way.

You may not consciously feel this way, and you may not think these thoughts, but your behavior, the way you speak, the way you present yourself (e.g. that self-deprecating tone when you are talking about yourself), that all says: "Poor me, I am good but don't get what I deserve". In other words, "I am a good person for being an unlucky person". Not only is this dishonest and inaccurate - you probably have a higher quality of life than most other people in the world - but it is also very off-putting for others and it destroys your self-confidence.

So, let's draw a line in the sand right here, right now: *no more being a victim!*

It does not mean that you are going to suddenly become perfect, but I want you to commit to *responsibility*. If you can't commit to that, you can stop reading right here. Email me to get your money back. I can't help you unless you commit to stop being a victim and take responsibility for your life.

Ownership instead of blame

This means owning your issues. Owning your decisions. Owning your behavior. Realizing that everything about your life is a direct result of your decisions and therefore your behavior, and so everything is your responsibility. Nobody has done anything *to* you. I mean, they have done things to you, but your reaction to what happened to you determines whether those things were helpful or harmful.

If you are traumatized or if you feel hurt by the world, it isn't just *the world* that did that to you. It's your reaction to what the world did to you. While it may have been what felt like an uncontrollable reaction, still you must take responsibility for that reaction, because nobody else is in charge of it. Nobody controls your reaction. Only you do, even if it's subconscious. Only your mind manages the way you respond to things, and therefore you are responsible for everything in your life at all times.

You must commit to stop blaming external forces for the way you are, and for the results in your life. Now, you can say that fate and luck have a lot to do with the results in your life, and of course they do, but how you feel about those results, and how you respond to them, that is all you! So you cannot blame anyone else for that.

It doesn't matter if you had crappy parents. It doesn't matter if you were bullied at school. It doesn't matter if your relationships were disastrous. I experienced most of those things. It doesn't matter, because who I am right here, right now, is *my choice*. So, even if all the way up until this point in your life you have been a victim, you are not now, because I just made you aware of the fact that you control all of your decisions and behaviors, and therefore you control the quality of your life. So, stop blaming. It does not serve you or anyone else.

What is responsibility in practice?

What this means, practically speaking, is becoming *solution-focused*. When something happens that I don't like, something painful or harmful or frustrating, my first reaction is not to point fingers at anyone. That is blaming. Solution-focused responsibility is thinking: *"What do I do about it? What's the best move? What is my best response? How do I make the most of this?"* Can you see the difference between blame and responsibility?

Responsibility isn't saying: "I am the one who caused this." Rather, it's saying: "It does not matter who caused this! I am the one who has to deal with it. I am the one who has to come up with the solution to this problem." Become the person who solves problems, but remember, only *your* problems.

Everybody else's issues are not yours. You have to give back the responsibility to people. Somebody else is suffering? It's *their* job to fix it. Somebody else can't figure out the answer? It's *their* job to find it out. Now, you might end up supporting them with their work, but only after you have first taken responsibility for your stuff, and solved all that. And trust me, you've got a lot of work there, so it's going to be some time before you are going to be available to solve other people's problems for them.

The Big Bang

Switching from "Why is this happening?" to "What am I going to do about it?" is a form of mental revolution. It's a switch from trying to figure out the cause (which is pointless and impossible), to planning, strategizing and implementing a new behavior that increases your quality of life.

Notice, when you try to place blame, that you must arbitrarily choose to land on something and stop searching there. For example, if I say “My parents screwed me up”, I’ve decided to stop there and not ask “But who screwed *them* up?” If I were to ask that, the answer would be *their* parents (probably). But should I then stop there? I can ask that same question yet again - “Who screwed up my grandparents?”. Over and over I can repeat this process.

And you know where I eventually end up? At the Big Bang! At the beginning of the universe. Any problem you have ever had started because the universe started. That is the most accurate place you can lay blame. Everything else is the result of a supply-chain of cause and effect, starting right back at the beginning (feel free to blame God instead if you prefer). So blaming anything other than the Big Bang (or God) is inaccurate and lazy, and blaming the Big Bang is pointless, so you end up at the only logical place: blaming is an idiotic waste of time.

Stop taking responsibility… for others

Taking responsibility for yourself is actually a lot about *not* doing stuff. And one of the main things that you have to stop doing is managing other people. I don’t mean literally being a manager at work, I mean controlling other people: trying to control their emotions, trying to fix their problems, trying to manipulate them into seeing you in a certain way or saying things in a certain way. It’s time for you to *just let go.*

What I recommend you do is to transport all the energy that you put into managing other people into managing your own behavior. There’s a lot of work there to be done, so you need a lot of energy for that: to be able to think through your next move, making sure that your decision is based on your core values, making sure that you are taking responsibility rather than blaming, looking for solutions, putting in the effort, doing uncomfortable brave actions, doing what’s right rather than what is easy. That is going to require a lot of energy, and you are going to have to take that energy away from making others happy, solving other people’s problems, helping people without their permission, entertaining, giving advice that you weren’t asked for, and all that other stuff that you do to manage people.

And those people that judge you unfairly, those people who have a wrong idea about you, just let them, ok? Just let them. Nothing is going to happen to you. You are just going to not have a connection with a person that judges you. No big loss.

Responsibility is about making the management of your own behavior, and your integrity, the number one priority above *anything* else, even your children. First, you get *your* stuff right and *then* you help other people. But, make sure that you help other people in a way that is really beneficial for them, not in a way that serves your people-pleasing tendencies. Help people when they ask you to help them, and help them only if helping them is more beneficial to their long-term quality of life than not helping them all.

Honesty

In this chapter we are going to talk about my very favorite concept: honesty.

Niceness and people pleasing is essentially a lie. It is a manipulation that we use to control the way other people think and feel, so that we can manage, through other people, the way that *we* think and feel. Honesty is the cure, and a way out of these problems, since it's very difficult to be both honest and a people pleaser. Usually you can only be one at the time; there's very little overlap. So, the great thing about radical honesty - about being really honest without caring what other people think - is that if you are doing that, you know that at that very moment you are definitely not people pleasing.

What is honesty?

Speak the truth. Speak what's on your mind. Tell people how you *really* feel about things. Tell people your opinions and if you can't do that, at least don't lie. So, either you are speaking the truth or you are staying silent. And that extends to your body language as well. Don't laugh when you think it's not funny. When you don't really agree, be silent, don't pretend to agree with your body language either. Don't go somewhere where you don't want to go. Don't do something that you think it's wrong to do. It's very, very simple.

Now, you may be trying to figure out what "The Truth" is, and philosophically speaking, that is a very complicated quest. However, if you ask yourself if you are *being honest* right now, the answer to that is very simple. You intuitively know when you are concealing something, and not speaking out your opinions, feelings, your *current personal* truth. Don't worry overly about the objective truth, focus more on expressing your subjective truth.

Generally speaking, in order to be honest, there are some things that need to be turned down, like exaggeration, added details and fiction used to make things more interesting, funnier, more memorable, or more impressive. So, if you usually add to a story to make it funnier (without making it obvious this is fiction), you are now just going to remove the added bit and tell the actual story. That's being more honest.

There are also things that need to be turned up. For example, you need to learn how to use stronger and more accurate words to describe how you are feeling. So, describe yourself as being "angry", rather than "annoyed" or "frustrated". In order to express how you actually feel, rather than minimizing it, or sugar coating it, use words like "confused" rather than "unsure", and "attracted" rather than a generic compliment.

We are going to turn up the stuff that you dialed down to avoid upsetting people, and we are going to turn down the stuff that you dialed up to make people like you.

Hidden forms of dishonesty

You will also need to stop with false humility. You know that thing you do when you play down how well you did or you undermine your success? You are going to stop doing that now. So, if you did well, then you did well and you should speak about it as such. Don't pretend that it wasn't as good as it was. Don't pretend that you aren't as excited about things as you really are.

Practice not apologizing. Now technically, there's nothing wrong with apologizing, but when Nice Guys and people pleasers do it, it's almost always always an act of manipulation. You are not really sorry, or if you are sorry it's for something that you don't actually control, so it makes no sense. Only apologize for things that you can control and you genuinely regret doing, even if no one caught you doing it. For anything else, don't say "Sorry".

Talk like a cop

Try to keep it simple and direct: state just the facts and your feelings about those facts, or your opinions about those facts, and nothing more. Don't try to manage the other person's reaction for them - you know, that extra stuff you put into your conversations trying to make it easier for them to receive it, or trying to make them more likely to listen to you, or any of that stuff you do to try to manage the way they receive your information. Do your best to remove that padding. Just tell them exactly how you feel about things and let them figure out how they are going to react to it.

Imagine that you get a knock on your door at 3am, and it's the police. What would it feel like if it took them 15 minutes to build up to the part when they finally tell you that your partner has been in a car accident? You know, if they did all of that padding: "Oh, maybe you should have a seat, this is going to be hard to hear, and I don't want to ruin your night…" etc, and they do that big wind up where you are sitting and going: "God, just tell me!" Police in real life would be more direct: "Look, we got some bad news for you, your partner has been in an accident". Aim to speak like that, cut straight to the chase.

Now, for you, that might look like saying: "Boss, I got to say I disagree with you on that one", or "Excuse me, I just want to tell you that I think you are very attractive and I noticed you straight away". It's these little things that you just have to call out, as if you are giving them the headline of what you want to say, the full truth right up front, without any explanation, without any suspense or build up or justification. Just give it to them, let them react, and then explain yourself if they do not understand. But don't explain it *before* they react.

Preferences

A key focus should be your preferences: what you like, what you don't like, what you prefer, what you want, what you do not want. Try to be as honest about these things as you can, more than anything else. In fact, this is the main thing you need to focus on.

If somebody says: “Do you want this for dinner?”, don’t ever say “I don’t know”, or “It doesn’t matter”, or “You choose”. Always say what you’d prefer, even if you only slightly prefer it. This is very important for recovery from people pleasing. Because people pleasing is a lot of self-suppression: you convince yourself that you don’t care that much about things, so that you never have to have a confrontation about them. It’s time to turn off that suppression. No matter how slightly you feel in favor of something, you’ve got to go all in on it.

When somebody asks you “What do you want for dinner?”, say “I want chicken!”, even if you know that they want pizza. It’s a little thing, and you don’t have to win the fight (you might end up having pizza), just as long as you give breath to the truth about how you feel. Never say “I don’t know”, never say “I don’t care”, because that is never true. Always call out your preference.

Caught red-handed

Now, you are not going to get this perfect; I still don’t. And there will be times when you accidentally or unintentionally manipulate someone with dishonesty. That’s ok, *provided you tell them about it*. A lot of honesty in practice is really about working backwards to undo the lies or mistruths that you just told, or the ones from your past (regarding past lies it’s probably best to start with the more recent ones and work on the big lies from your past later on, when you are more brave).

Let’s say I notice that, while telling you a story, I am exaggerating parts of the story to make you more impressed. I can then simply admit to that. I just say: “You know, I just noticed that I added all of these details to the story so that you would think it was funnier. I do that sometimes, just ignore me when I do that.” You can reveal your little manipulative strategy.

It’s actually quite fun to do, and most people are pretty accepting of it. They think it’s a good laugh, and you can learn to add some humor to this. You can learn to laugh at being a Nice Guy rather than trying to hide it. You can call it out - “I am a people pleaser, you caught me!” - except they did not catch you, *you* caught *yourself*, and you showed them the real you.

This is one of the easiest ways to redeem yourself in terms of dishonesty, this lighthearted fun approach of calling out your own crap. It makes people far more likely to forgive you for your lies, and for some reason that I still don’t understand, people will think of you as more honest when you reveal that you lied than if you never lie at all. I still don’t know why that happens. But people take revealing of lies, revealing of strategy, revealing of manipulation, as a greater sign of integrity than never actually lying in the first place.

Small but significant

Start small and build up. Odds are, if you are a long term people pleaser, then you are very very dishonest. In fact, you are very dishonest with yourself. You probably think of yourself as an honest person, and yet if I were to ask you if you tell everyone how you feel about them, or if

you are always up front with your opinions, or if you confront aggressive people when you think that they are wrong, chances are you would respond with a “No”. That’s ok. Start small.

I remember one of the most significant things I’ve ever done, right at the beginning when I first embarked on this journey of being honest: I was running a team meeting, I told my team that I was feeling “a little bit stressed”. Now, that was actually kind of underplaying it, I was very stressed, but it was a big deal for me to admit to people that I was stressed at all. I never did that before, because I always wanted them to think of me as perfect and totally under control. This was a little step that was very significant for me.

You don’t have to suddenly confront all of the bullies from your past about how they’ve treated you, that is something that you can work on later. You can tell yourself: “Right now, I am just going to be a little bit more honest about my emotions, and maybe I’m gonna tell someone I feel safe with how I really feel, or admit to someone that I exaggerated a story, or anything that I can feel that I can handle”.

Start there, and you can build up to a bigger level of honesty later. Don’t put pressure on yourself to be some 100% radically honest person overnight. It’s not going to happen. It’s too scary. But you can increase the honesty by one, five, ten percent each day, and you will get there eventually.

Track and measure

Review at the end of each day some key conversations or interactions you had, and ask yourself, “How honest was I?” And when you were really honest, give yourself a pat on the back, and when you were not, ask yourself “Why was I dishonest? Was I afraid of their reaction, did I make up a story, was it just a habit that I didn't notice doing?”

Build up your self-awareness around your dishonesty. That’s all. You don’t need to put pressure on yourself. You don’t need to say, “Oh, now I must go and do something about it”. Just notice it more, because a lot of the time the reason you are being dishonest is that you are unconscious to it happening. It’s an auto-pilot response. Once you become aware of it, you will notice it happening in the moment and you might stop yourself a little more, and you might catch it and correct it a little more, and slowly build up to being an honest person.

You will probably end up going through a phase where you start to doubt why you say *anything*. You might think that you don’t really know if you have ever been honest, if it’s all a manipulation. It can get a little confusing, but this is actually your fear just trying to stop you from engaging in further honesty. To this day, I occasionally wonder if even my radical honesty is just another scam I’m running on people. It’s probably good to be wary, otherwise I might really slip into some sort of manipulation.

To keep this simple, what you need to do is speak first and figure it out later. If you don’t know that what you are saying is honest, or you don’t know why you are saying it or if you have good

intentions, your insecurity doesn't matter. Say it first, and then once you have said it, look back over it and go: “Why did I *really* do that? Was that the truth?” It’s a lot easier to analyze it after it’s out than before it leaves your mouth. So, speak first, clean it up later.

If you say something, and you are like, “Eh, that wasn’t quite honest”, just tell the person! Right? “You know what, as soon as I said that, I realized that it wasn’t quite the truth. What I really mean is…”.

And that is how you slowly build up to being a more honest person, which, by the way, you are going to enjoy a lot more than keeping up the mask and the performance all the time. Performing brings exhaustion, honesty brings in energy and freedom.

Confrontations

At this point in the book, I'd like to insert a practical chapter about confrontations. Confrontations are such a big topic, they could be an entire book on their own. What I'll try to give you is the essence and the most practical tips, so that you can engage in healthy, helpful confrontations right away. The fundamental core of recovering from Nice Guy Syndrome resides in confrontations.

Confrontations vs conflicts

Confrontations could be conceived of as *going into honest conversations and interactions that make you emotionally uncomfortable*. Confrontations are about your ability to stand up for yourself, to stand up for what you believe in and express ideas, opinions, information, and emotions that you believe are going to trigger an uncomfortable response in you and/or the person receiving it. That's what a confrontation is, and this is necessary to your recovery. Most of Nice Guy Syndrome is essentially an avoidance of conflict, and with confrontation, we have to take the risk of being in and creating a conflict.

I like to separate the idea of confrontation from the idea of conflict because they're not the same thing. A “confrontation” is merely an assertive expression of your truth. That is all. Confrontations usually go well with people who are encouraging and have a history of reacting positively to truth. These are people who do not take things personally, and you know that you can always talk through any issue with them, even if you have to go through a lengthy debate. In the end, after a rational debate you will arrive at a mutually beneficial conclusion. That’s a confrontation.

A “conflict” is an unreasonable or unhelpful emotional reaction to a confrontation. Conflict is a reaction, and a confrontation is an expression. So, if somebody reacts badly to the way you express your truth, they are *in conflict*. Now, if you can allow them to be in conflict without trying to fix them, without trying to control them, and without letting them pull you into the conflict, you remain in a confrontation while they're in a conflict.

Conflicts are not your fault

You have to let go of the idea that a confrontation *causes* a conflict. I can go around and confront 100 different people with the exact same confrontation, and yet I'm going to get 100 different reactions. Some of these reactions are going to be perfectly reasonable and healthy, and won't result in a conflict.

People end up having a conflict because of their own issues: many times it is because of their own trauma, their wounds, and their conditioning. It’s their own programming that makes them sensitive and that makes them take things personally, which ends up making them feel offended. You didn't do any of that *to* them. No matter how extreme or controversial the things you may say, it’s still a confrontation.

A confident, healthy person can react without conflict, so whenever you're seeing a conflict in somebody else you've got to understand that it's not about you, but rather it’s about them. *There's nothing you need to do about their conflict.* This does not mean that you do not take responsibility for your words, it just means that you don’t take responsibility for their reaction.

Make it very clear in your mind: conflict is not a *necessary* part of a confrontation. In a confrontation, you are simply expressing your truth that you predict will trigger a so-called “bad reaction”, which is to say, an uncomfortably emotional reaction in the other person.

It doesn’t have to be a debate

Confrontation is also not the same as an *argument*, since it doesn't have to keep going back and forth. Confrontation is just you expressing your truth. Once the truth is out, you're done. If you want to keep talking about it, you can - if it amuses you and if it's helpful to your relationship, do it. But remember that you don't *have* to. There's nothing to defend. You never have to defend your truth.

If you have an opinion about the *objective* truth - if you have an opinion about scientific facts, about how the world works - then that is something that *can* be debated. However, if you're just saying: “This is my truth. This is how I feel. This is what I prefer. This is what I believe. This is how I reacted to what you did”, that's just *your* truth. There's no debate here. This doesn't need to go back and forth.

Do not think that a confrontation means that you have to have an argument, and that you must defend yourself. No, you don't need to. You don't need to defend the way you feel. Your feelings just exist and you're just showing it to the other person. If they don't want to accept your feelings, that's their problem, not yours.

Let's get practical: Preparation

First and foremost, if you're going to confront somebody, it's best to prepare them. The worst reaction you're going to get out of a human being is right after giving them a shock, a negative surprise. So, if you want to bring the best out of people, you want to make sure that you don't shock them with stuff. And it's as simple as a small prep - you don't want to overdo this, but you want to make sure that they know that something's coming so they're not king-hit by your truth.

You also do not want to be too suspenseful. It can be as simple as saying: “Look, there's something uncomfortable that I need to talk to you about. Do you mind if we take five minutes somewhere private?” That's it. It should be a single sentence just to let them know something's about to happen.

Also, this will give them a chance to say: “Now's not a good time" or whatever, and to arrange a time that would work for them. However, don't let someone keep putting you off indefinitely. Say: “Okay, well when's a good time for you?”, and make sure to arrange an appointment with them.

Treat people who refuse to engage in discussions the same way you'd treat people who react very badly to you trying to be truthful, which is: *cut them off*.

I always want to give people a chance to have a decent conversation. Some people are going to feel very uncomfortable, sometimes it's going to be awkward for both them and you, and you've got to accept that sometimes it has to be like this. You can always say: "Look, nobody wants this to happen. Nobody wants to have this conversation. But it's got to be done for the health of our relationship. So, give me five minutes, so we can sort this out".

When it comes to preparing someone before a confrontation, you might need to make it clear that what you are about to say is not something that should be debated, but rather is just an expression you want to get out there. I want to make it clear to you, and you should make it clear to anybody you are about to confront: *this isn't a debate*. So, if you're just telling someone how you feel, how you reacted to something they did, while believing it would be good for your relationship - that might not be a discussion, it might be just you stating something, and it's up to them to respect it or not.

However, if you want to talk about how the two of you should react to each other, how the two of you should relate to each other, the boundaries and agreements of your relationship, how you should work together, how you should do a project together, how they should change their behavior, that is absolutely fine! But that *is* debatable. That requires interaction to go a certain way. And you have to be open to the idea of coming to some sort of reasonable compromise that doesn't betray your integrity.

The BEIRD Model

Let's look at a simple model that I learned in the Department of Corrections called the BEIRD model. It's a step by step process, and it works as a training wheels exercise for your early confrontations, to make sure you give the other person the best possible chance to hear what you're saying without taking it personally. You can even script your own confrontation out according to the BEIRD model.

B: Behavior

This model is based on giving someone feedback on their behavior. Essentially, you need to specify the behavior that you're talking about when it comes to confronting somebody. What's the exact thing they did? That's the issue here; you never attack someone as an *entire person*, and you don't say that they *always* do something or that they *never* do it.

You're only ever talking to someone about their specific behaviors, never talk to them as an entire personality, because it's too much for them to change. They're just going to get defensive. And it's unfair and untrue. Somebody isn't bad all the time - even the worst person in the world has good moments during the day. So you only speak of a specific behavior so that you're really accurate.

E: Examples or evidence

Giving them evidence or examples ensures that they know that you're not being vague, and that you're not making stuff up. So, you want to give very specific examples. If I say, “Look, I want to talk to you about some of your disrespectful behavior in team meetings”, chances are the other person is already getting defensive. The other person might say “I'm not disrespectful!”. In that case, you must give them some evidence. For example, you may say something like, “At the meeting yesterday, you interrupted me in the middle of my sentence, I consider that to be disrespectful”.

You give them an example so that they can't deny it. They were there, and so they know what happened. It's not something that they can argue, and say that it did not happen. You were both there, you both saw it happen. This is a way of killing the defensiveness if they attack your initial assessment of their behavior that you're trying to talk about. Not being specific or accurate enough totally undermines the conversation. You don't want to give them anything that they can counter because, remember, this is not a debate.

I: Impact

This is where you get really personal about *yourself*. You're not even saying that their behavior is objectively bad. You're saying it had a bad impact on *you* personally. And that's the way it's going to come across.

So, to continue with the meeting example, you could say: “You know, at the team meeting the other day, you cut me off in the middle of my sentence, which I considered to be disrespectful *since it makes me feel very small, like nobody's listening to me*.” That's the impact it has on you.

You don't say that what they did means they are a bad person or even that it means they are objectively disrespectful. You are just describing the way you reacted to it. What you are saying is: “I'm just telling you how I react to being interrupted so that you know how to work with me better.”

R: Relating

Relating is an optional step, for times when someone gets really defensive, or when you can clearly see that they feel judged. When you see that the other person feels that they're being attacked by you, relate to their behavior. What this allows you to do is to basically say: “I do it too”. In this way, you're saying that you are not *better* than them.

Using the previous example, you could say: “I actually do this as well, you know, whenever Betty speaks up I find myself interrupting her. And I hate that I do that because I'm a hypocrite”.

In this way you neutralize any sense that they're being judged or attacked, by saying: “Look, we all do and say things that are harmful to our relationships. I do it too. I am working on it. I would like you to work on it with me, that’s all”. You are not saying: “I'm better than you, and I am

telling you how to live”. If you come from that place of judgment, it's very hard to get a good reaction.

D: Doing

What would you like them to do differently? Don't just leave them slapped by your feedback, needing to figure out for themselves how they should interact with you. Tell them exactly what you’d prefer, exactly what you want.

Now, this last point might be debatable. You might ask for something that's unreasonable or unfair according to their judgment. You can't debate your feelings or the impact that other person’s behavior had on you, but you might have to debate the solution.

It might be as simple as saying: “Next time in the meeting, even if I'm ranting on, just let me finish and then I'll let you talk. Just as long as you let me get to the end of my sentence, I'll be happy. Even if we disagree after that, even if you prove me wrong, that's fine. Just let me finish talking and I'll feel respected”.

Confrontations are feedback

What you're doing by applying this model is giving people respectful feedback. You're telling them: “This is how to respect me. This is how I would like you to interact with me in the healthiest possible way”. And you're also opening up, at least in the very last part, a debate about the best way for the two of you to interact. They might respond with negative feedback directed towards you as well, so be open to listening to it - maybe you're both doing something that could be improved upon.

I've found in my work as a coach that when it comes to any kind of relationship, but couples in particular, it's always 50/50: meaning that there's rarely only one person that is fully bad. For the most part, both people are doing things that are harmful for the relationship. Both need to change their behavior. Be open to your confrontation going both ways.

Going back to our example: yes, the person might interrupt you in the meeting, but maybe you're being oversensitive to people disagreeing with you, or maybe you’re talking too much. And that's unhelpful to the relationship. So, maybe you need to step up as well.

But what if they react badly?

Now, if the person that you are confronting reacts poorly, there's a couple of things that you can do.

One way of approaching it is not to take their first reaction too seriously. Chances are, their first reaction is a reflection of the shock of being confronted. Even if you prepare someone, they probably don't like to be confronted, and most people feel very uncomfortable with being told that they're doing something wrong. Even if they're a good person, they might feel bad that

they've hurt you. And they might have a defensive reaction, or a guilt reaction, or shame reaction. If right out of the gate they have an initial emotional response, don't take it too seriously. Give them 24 hours to cool off before you start taking the reaction seriously.

I've had people react quite poorly to me confronting them, but then the next day they treat me better. In this case, the latter reaction is to be taken more seriously than the former. Once they got over the confrontation, they realized whatever was right and they decided to do something that makes our relationship better.

If, however, they're still behaving poorly after a few days, then you need to start thinking about whether you need this person in your life. They're now deliberately and purposefully choosing to disrespect you. Either you are too sensitive, or they're disrespectful. Either way, this relationship doesn't work. So the next question to ask yourself is: “How do I put up some walls, some boundaries, to protect myself from this person?”

You could also get a reaction where a person doesn't want to disrespect you, but they just don't *agree* with you. They might think that you're over-reacting, or that you're not seeing things accurately. They are not trying to manipulate or undermine you, they just have a different interpretation of reality. In this case, you can extend an acceptance invitation, which really means agreeing to disagree, and to let each other live peacefully.

The Acceptance Invitation

In relation to our example, you might say something like:

“Look, as long as you let me be me, I'll let you be you. That's the invitation I'm going to give to you. You don't have to agree that I'm right about this. You don't have to think that what I'm saying is rational. Just understand that you don't need to interrupt me. There's no situation where interrupting me pays off for our relationship. So, if you just accept that, and don't interrupt me, even if you disagree with why I'm sensitive about being interrupted, that's good enough for me. You don't have to understand me, you just have to respect me. And I'll respect you too”.

If they refuse your acceptance invitation, you now know that you're dealing with someone who's *wilfully* disrespecting you. At this point you have to assertively deal with them, which in most cases means that you will probably have to cut them out of your life, or take the necessary steps to protect yourself from them.

Bad news…

Now, here's what's going to happen in real life: *one confrontation isn't gonna do it.* People make mistakes, they forget, they slip, or you're sensitive to the way they are. So there's going to be a frequency of clashing.

You may think that setting a boundary the first time is the hard part, but you would be wrong. The hard part comes next, which is to *maintain* the boundary. You have to be okay with the idea

that you're going to have to confront someone over and over again. Even if they are someone who loves and respects you, you might have to keep bringing an issue up.

If you have to keep bringing an issue up, it doesn't necessarily mean that you have a bad relationship with that person. It just means that the boundary you set is hard for them to stick with. If every time you remind them they say: “Oh, yeah, that's right”, and they adjust their behavior, they're showing that they respect you but they forgot (but don’t mistake verbal promises for behavior change).

For example, I have a friend who overshares. She will interrupt and talk over me. She can't help it; she's like this with everyone, it's partly an anxiety disorder symptom. I don't expect her to change that permanently. What it means is that quite often in our friendship I have to bring it up. I could just say it once and hope that she will never do it again, but it’s unreasonable of me to expect a permanent change in behavior that goes so against her nature. So, I must have the patience and the bravery to keep bringing it up. I keep resetting that boundary, and she keeps respecting it. But it’s on me: I have to keep bringing it up. Why? Because it’s *my* preference, not hers.

So, get ready for some ongoing maintenance. It’s just like teaching a child discipline. You're going to have to say “no” to them over and over and over again. You can't just say “no” once, and hope that they will never do it again. Right? You have to keep saying “no” patiently and calmly, as if it's the first time. You must set the boundary with love and acceptance for them as a human being who’s struggling to maintain the boundary.

Know the difference between that and wilfully disrespectful behavior. Some people break the boundary because they can't help themselves. Others do it with an intention to hurt you. Know the difference and respond accordingly.

Bravery

It's time for the next trait of Nice Guy and people pleasing recovery, and that is bravery (or courage). It’s very important that we get the definition of bravery as exact as possible. The most simple way to put it is: *bravery is feeling the fear and doing it anyway*. What this means in more practical terms is understanding that all discomfort, be it physical, emotional or mental, is a manifestation of fear. So bravery is really challenging the fear of doing actions that make you feel uncomfortable, or where you're uncomfortable in anticipation of performing a future action (which might actually be pleasant once you get started).

Understanding “discomfort”

This doesn't mean that you should do all the things that you can think of that make you uncomfortable, since not all of them will be beneficial to you. But generally speaking, bravery is an attitude of not shrinking away from an option that feels uncomfortable; building up a tendency to choose the uncomfortable option if it’s also the *right* one.

Maybe the discomfort is making you feel hesitant and wary. Maybe the discomfort manifests in terms of confusion or frustration. Maybe it's the anticipation of things going wrong. Maybe it's the experience of actual fear: you may have sweaty palms, increased heart rate, etc. Anything that you don't enjoy experiencing is discomfort. And any discomfort is fear.

Bravery is doing something that you think will make you feel or does make you feel discomfort. The more often you can face your fear and discomfort, the more courageous a person you become. Again, like with honesty, it's very hard to be both courageous and a people pleaser at the same time. People pleasing is the easy way out, so choosing the hard path is almost always a recovery action.

False rationality

Be wary of mental narratives that look like rational reasoning but are actually fear, like suddenly experiencing apathy and lost motivation for something that you were previously interested in. When you're talking yourself into delaying something, that's almost certainly fear. Fear likes to make you delay action, because it can keep delaying it forever. Fear can prompt you to delay it till tomorrow. Then, when tomorrow arrives, it can delay it till tomorrow again, and it has the stamina to keep doing this until the day you die. There will always be something to procrastinate on, and sometimes you may come up with some really good reasons to keep procrastinating. Remember, it’s just fear.

What you need to do is to wipe those reasons and that rationality aside, and just think: “Is this the right thing to do?” Yes. “Do I feel uncomfortable doing it?” Yes. “All right, that means that this needs to be done”. It doesn't matter what the reasons are to delay it. It needs to be done. Getting into that mindset is bravery.

Assertiveness

Bravery is about being assertive and bold. This does not mean being aggressive. This is not an attempt to dominate others, or to take what you want without respect for others. It's just about *going for it*; respecting your own needs and wants without allowing others to disrespect you.

Being assertive also means holding the line, not allowing someone else (or yourself) to cross your boundaries and make you less than what you are. Imagine yourself as a fortress. To be aggressive would be to leave your fortress and attack somebody else. Being assertive is just about not letting anyone over your wall. They're allowed to come up to the wall, but they can't come *over*. That means saying “no” to people. It means telling people what you don't like. It means disagreeing. It means not going along with something if you think it's wrong.

Being assertive also means not trying to change anyone else. If they want to do all those disagreeable things, you're going to let them unless it harms you personally or harms someone whom you see yourself as needing to protect. If they want to go in a particular direction in their own life, you let them do it. That's respect. Respect goes both ways. Being assertive means that disrespect doesn't come into or leave your fortress.

Slow, loud and proud

Assertiveness is about being slow, loud and proud, particularly in the way you speak, but also in the way you move. Slow everything down. A brave person *never* needs to rush. They never allow others to make them feel rushed. They never try to catch up to anything. They are never behind. So, make sure to take your time with all of your behaviors and your words.

Being “loud" isn't just about volume. It's about taking up the space to which you're entitled. It means that if you sit down on a seat on the bus, you are allowed to spread your legs if that's what makes you comfortable. It means that when you're in a team meeting, you do have the right to speak, so speak when it's your turn to speak. It means taking up the space that's allotted to you, without trying to dominate somebody else's space.

Of course, loudness also refers specifically to the voice. There’s a little trick that you can use: talk as if your voice has to go *through* the person. If a person is one meter away from you, talk as if they're standing two meters away from you. That's about the right level of volume for someone to be bold.

“Proud” means unapologetically doing things as if you *know* that they're right. Now, it doesn't mean that they *are* right, and you might need to correct yourself later - you might need to fix up the damage that you've done and clean up the messes that you make. But first, go and make the mess as if it's the best thing in the world to do. If you're going to do something, or say something, then do it and say it as if it's the best thing in the world to do or say (we'll talk more about decisiveness in the next section). Essentially, it's about going *all in* on everything you say,

and doing so without that hesitancy and apology and self doubt that you feel bubbling up inside you. Ignore that and override it, and just go for it.

Go for it!

When you think of taking the first brave steps, for now think of it in this way: it's better to be impulsive than hesitant. Eventually, you'll get to a point where you take the right amount of time to think things through before you act. But if you're generally a hesitant and fearful person, if you need to work on bravery, then you need to override the fear that makes you delay, and one way to do it is to act *immediately*.

See, when you feel fear arising, it still takes a while - a few seconds at least - for you to come up with the narrative and the story to talk yourself out of doing something. If you can act within the first three to five seconds of coming up with an idea, fears are unlikely to influence you enough for you to have time to create a narrative and sabotage your attempt. I'd suggest trying to get a bit more impulsive, and act a bit quicker (you still move slowly but you don't pause or hesitate to get started).

You'll feel like you're surfing a wave and you don't know how and when it's going to crash, like your body is moving quicker than your mind's ability to anticipate and solve potential issues, and that's okay. You are going to make mistakes, and it's going to get messy. *This isn't about getting good outcomes*. This is about becoming brave, trusting your instincts, and going with your first idea. It's actually what's going to help you come up with better ideas, and help you be more accurate in the future.

Hesitating, doubting, overthinking - these things don't help you improve your decision making. It just means that you're going to be less experienced with decision making. Bravery means acting quickly. And for now, that means acting impulsively. You can get more careful later, when you're not so scared.

Essentialism

When you speak or act, try to be concise. Use the fewest words and actions required to get the message out there or to achieve the goal. People pleasers tend to add a lot of *padding*; we try to anticipate how people are going to react. We add a lot of words and behaviors to cushion the blow, to make people more likely to accept us, and to make them happier about our decision. We try to explain everything to people. Try your best to cut all that stuff out, and only say exactly what needs to be said to get the message across, and then let people react however they feel like reacting.

Wait for people to ask you for more information. Give people the minimum that they need. *That* is bravery. Essentialism is the opposite to perfectionism. Perfectionism is a form of insecurity. Trying to do everything at once is a type of anxiety, a controlling behavior. A brave person

doesn't try to control things that they know they can't control. Brave and bold people just focus on what's right for them.

Let's talk about *essentialism*. Essentialism is about cutting out all the stuff that isn't totally necessary and helpful to the goal. About 80% of what you're doing right now is probably worth cutting, whether that's the work that you do in the workplace, the amount of people you hang out with, your to-do list, how much you explain yourself etc.

If you organize the actions that you usually do each day in terms of priority, from the most important and valuable and meaningful tasks, down to the bottom of meaningless mediocre tasks, chances are that you will find that 80% of the tasks can be cut. Let's say you're doing 10 tasks at work, there's probably only about two or three of them that actually *matter*. Chances are, they're probably the most emotionally uncomfortable tasks. The rest might be easier to do, but they don't really contribute to your work performance outcomes (e.g. if you're in sales, this means anything that isn't serving potential clients or selling directly), and nobody would really notice if you didn't do them. Try to behave, and speak, in a way in which only the important and meaningful things and words are prioritized. Everything else doesn't just deprioritize, it gets cut *completely*.

The path of *most* resistance

Act as if you can handle bad reactions. This isn't some sort of "fake it till you make it" thing. You must have been able to handle everything that's ever happened to you to be in the position to read this chapter, right? So start acting as if that's true (because it is). Rather than trying to predict how you're going to manage the situation, just blast into it! You're going to be able to handle it.

Go into new situations as often as possible. Look for something that you think is uncomfortable to do and just dive into it. Fill up your calendar with activities like this, and without any planning, just jump into them. It doesn't matter if you get things wrong, because that's training. The point is to do something that you're uncomfortable doing and to do something that you haven't prepared for. There's a great way to recover from people pleasing fears.

In general, choose the path of *most* resistance. You're not going to have to do this forever, it's a training step. You'll find that if you reflect on your life, from the big decisions down to the smallest ones, you tend to choose the easiest way out, the way that requires the least effort, hassle, and emotional discomfort. Chances are that in your life you took the path of *least* resistance. Some of you got married because it was simply the path of least resistance. Some of you went and did entire university degrees just because it was set up for you, and thus a path that was easy to choose. Perhaps the easy paths were wrong for you!

The same principle applies to small actions and decisions. One of the examples that I like to give is about the two walking paths that lead towards the supermarket that I go to. One of those paths is really easy - I don't bump into anyone. But the other one goes through a dark and

murky park area where surly teenagers are always smoking and hanging out, and it looks intimidating. When I'm walking to the supermarket, I always challenge myself to walk through the park (and nothing bad actually ever happens to me). I usually feel a slight hesitation about walking that particular pathway, and it's longer as well.

I am not saying that you should be reckless or put yourself in danger. What I am trying to say is: always challenge yourself and your comfort zone. Look for those opportunities in your life that will challenge your limiting beliefs and easy way out tendencies. Whenever there are two ways of doing something, choose the most difficult way. Choose the action that is the most uncomfortable for you, especially the one that's socially uncomfortable for you, as a way of snapping out of that mental habit of choosing the path of the least resistance.

This doesn't mean that these paths of greatest resistance will be the most efficient or even the best path to take. For now, it's really just about being brave. It's about choosing the thing that you avoided because it is uncomfortable. Step into it, just like walking into a cold shower, just to show yourself that you can.

Decisiveness

The next key element of Nice Guy recovery that we need to talk about is decisiveness: the ability to make bold and quick decisions that you follow with confident action.

Stay away from “Maybe”

Making a decision in your mind, but not acting on it, is only halfway towards actually being decisive. As is doing something that you're not fully into, or doing something you only pretend to be into, is a “maybe” position. Or doing something just in order to have a safety backup, just playing it safe by keeping your options open, although you are only half in. That “maybe” position is where your confidence goes to *die*. Decisiveness is about going *all in* on a decision and following through with behavior. It doesn't matter if it goes right or wrong, because decisiveness is the important part. If you want to love yourself, you need to be decisive.

Maybe you have heard of the “Hell Yes vs Hell No” attitude. These two concepts describe the action of going all in on something, or not doing it at all. No place for a maybe.

The general rule is: if you can't get to a “Hell yes!” attitude, then you must be, by default, in the “Hell no!” position. If you're not sure whether you really want to buy the car, you say “no” to the car and you let someone else buy it. If you're not really sure if you like that friend or not, don't invite them to the party.

If you really do want to go all in on something, then go *all* in, without worrying about safety nets. Do not worry about not having other options available: make your option the *only* option you're going to take, and live with the consequences.

You should be able to hear the power in this concept. Never again will you be in the “maybe” attitude. You'll either do it or you won't do it, and both of those decisions are equally powerful. *It almost doesn't matter which one you choose*, as long as you go all in or all out.

For example, if I choose not to go on a date with this person, then *I'm choosing to be single*. I'm going all in on being single, rather than going all in on this particular date. In this way, I'm always going all in on *something*, whether I say “yes” or “no”. But, when I say “maybe” I'm not going all in on anything, and that's why I feel so weak.

The 51% Rule

Now, when you've been a people pleaser or a Nice Guy for a long time, you might struggle to really know what you want. You have most probably suppressed your emotions for a long time. Chances are that you have been pretending and agreeable for so long that you've lost track of what you really prefer, what you really stand for, and what you actually want.

This is where we bring in what I call “the 51% rule”. If you're trying to decide between two things, and you really don't feel strongly about either of the two options, ask yourself which one are you 51% or more in favor of. What that means is noticing that you're never *exactly* 50/50 on any given decision. You'll want to eat the sandwich or not eat the sandwich; one of those options is at least *slightly* preferable to the other. If you really think about it, if somebody puts a gun to your head and says: “Which one do you prefer? You must choose!”, you will be able to make a decision and probably quite quickly, regardless of seeming ambivalence.

Try, as an exercise, to go all in on anything that's *over* 50%. So, if somebody asks you: “What do you want for dinner?”, and the choices are chicken or pizza, and you're just *slightly* in favor of pizza, then you go all in on pizza. “Let's get pizza. Let's do it right now!” You treat your decision and preference as if it's 100% certain. I'm not saying that you *pretend* that you're that into it, but you make the assumption that your feelings are so suppressed that even if you were 100% set on something, you wouldn't *feel* it. You have to first go with your choice to see how much you actually wanted it.

Let’s say that you're not sure about going on a date with that person: just do it - go on a date with them, as long as you're at least a little bit more interested in going out with someone than you are at staying home by yourself. Whenever there’s 51% desire, or more, of you leaning towards a certain preference, go all in on that with behavior, at least for a short period of time, until you start to realize what you actually want, and start to have feelings that are clearer to you.

Essentialism

Another element of decisiveness is *essentialism*, which means being able to understand what matters and what doesn't.

You might, for example, have a grand goal in your life. Maybe there's a kind of person you want to be: a confident person, or an honest person. Or maybe there are certain things you want to achieve. You may want to become a father, start your own business, or be generally “free”. Maybe there are certain values that you want to live by, like courage or acceptance.

Imagine the mindset of the person you want to be. Think of what kind of person you want to be, and what kind of life you want to have, and then come back from that hypothetical exercise and make decisions that will help you become that person. Think about decisions, big or small, and ask yourself a simple question: “Does the behavior that I am about to perform serve The Goal?” If the answer is “I don't know”, or “no”, then you *don't* do it. If the answer is “yes”, then you *must* do it. This kind of thinking makes decision making really easy.

For example, let's say I want to become a brave person, and in front of me are three options. One of them makes me uncomfortable, and the other two don't. It's really easy to see which one of those is going to serve the goal of me becoming a brave person. It doesn't even matter what

options I'm talking about; it doesn't matter what these things *are*. When the goal is to be brave, all I'm looking for is discomfort. It doesn't matter which form it takes.

Let's analyze something more practical. Let's say that I want to start my own business, but then my boss offers me more hours along with overtime pay. Being an employee, I have less time to work on my side business if I say "yes" to more hours. Does taking more hours serve my goal of starting my own business? No, it doesn't. So, I'm going to say "no" to accepting more hours. Simple. The extra money offered is irrelevant because it doesn't serve The Goal.

Do you see what I mean? Have the goal in mind and always ask yourself: "Does this action serve the goal more than the other option/s?" Anything that you're hesitant about or doesn't seem to directly serve the goal, say "no" to it. You mustn't add anything to your plate that doesn't serve your goal. Better to do nothing and sit around bored than waste time on something unhelpful.

The truth about risk

People pleasers are the opposite of risk takers. They're *risk avoidant*, which is actually the riskiest way to live! The more you try to avoid risk, the more dangerous life becomes because you become *fragile*. And *life* is risky. You can't avoid risk. You can only procrastinate on dealing with it, which makes it bigger.

We're going to practise decisiveness that is really risk taking: going all in on something, burning your bridges, not having a safety net, not having backup options, and treating your final choice like it's the only option available. It doesn't really matter what you're talking about as long as it meets risk criteria for growth.

Treat yourself as if you *already* trust your decision making, as if you're already good at making decisions, and you know that you're going to handle the consequences no matter what they are. Make your decision making aligned to that reality, and it will become true.

Getting it "wrong"

This brings us to the concept of "getting it wrong": making mistakes - things not going the way they were "supposed" to. This is the main reason people pleasers are so indecisive. It's because when you make a decision, then you have to face the consequences, and we don't like taking risks.

One thing you have to understand is: there is no such thing as a "bad" decision, because until the decision is made, we have no idea what's going to happen next - which opportunity will arise or which consequence will unfold. We can't accurately predict these things. We can make up scenarios in our head, but the decision itself creates a movement and becomes a new variable on its own, so we can't tell exactly what's going to happen until that movement takes place.

I might be able to look at someone I'm attracted to and predict that asking them out is going to go “wrong”, but my hypothetical prediction cannot accurately observe how they'll feel about what I say, or how they will actually react. They have to receive my words and react to them first. So, even if I ask them and they say: “Oh my God, get away from me!”, that couldn't have happened without me first saying it. I can't say that I made a “bad decision”, because up until their reaction we had no idea what was going to happen.

When the reaction does happen, it's always *exactly* the reaction we needed. Okay? However the world responds to your decision, it's not a mistake or an error or a failure. It is a lesson, well… a potential lesson. You can always grow from getting it “wrong”, provided you receive the feedback correctly.

If you go up to someone and you say: “This is who I really am. I like you. Will you date me?”, and they say “No”, you're learning about whom you should be talking to, and how you should be talking to them, whether or not they're a type of person that's good to have in your life, and so on. You have to understand: the ideal person for you will react *well* to your decisiveness and boldness, right?

If you're in a workplace that's right for you, then being decisive will mean you get promoted and you get respected by your peers and you get more responsibility and you get more pay. If you being decisive at your workplace gets you bullied and fired, then you're in the wrong workplace anyway! It's *good* to get fired from that job.

If you're decisive in your relationship, and your partner respects you more, your sex life improves, and you start communicating better, then you're with a good partner. If you being decisive makes your partner constantly argue with you, belittle you, criticize you, and talk negatively about you behind your back, then you're in a relationship with a bad partner. Next decision is to break up with them - just go for it.

There's nothing “wrong” happening here. No matter how badly you fail, according to your own standards, all you did was learn the lesson, an important lesson that you couldn't have learned without first taking that decisive action.

Zero justifications

Never justify your decisions to yourself. The decision was either the right one or it needs to change. That's it.

So if you're in a job that you don't really like, don't allow that big narrative to take place in your head and say: ”Oh well, at least my boss is okay, the pay is pretty good, and it's kind of close to my house etc etc”. If you have to do that, then that's the wrong decision. You shouldn't be at that job, because if you were at the right job - if you decided correctly about where you should work - and you ask yourself why is it that you do what you do, your answer would be: “Because the job

is awesome!” Case closed. It wouldn't be this big narrative, this big justification that works as an explanation to convince yourself.

If you struggle to convince yourself of why a decision is a good one, then it wasn't a good decision. If you need to convince yourself to stay with your partner, to stay at your job, to keep living at that flat, not to travel, and so on, then you know that you made a wrong decision. These narratives are all warning signs that you made the wrong decision and you need to undo it with the right decision.

Good news! You can *always* try something else instead. You are not obliged to continue your past mistakes. Treat them like someone else did it and signed you up for a contract that you no longer agree to. Just quit and try a different tack.

Brief promotion

If you like what you've read so far and feel ready to dive deeper into Nice Guy Recovery to become a more masculine, powerful and genuine person, maybe it's time you got in touch with me.

Through group-coaching and 1:1 coaching I help transform people pleasers into authentic and confident people of high value, who enjoy quality social circles, deep and fulfilling relationships, successful careers, and powerful self-worth.

"Dan talks on your level and is easy to communicate with. He's grounded and accepting and open about his own personal issues which makes it easy to open up to him. My confidence has increased and I'm comfortable being me. I'm happy with who I am and wouldn't want to change for anything. Read his book, have a taster session. See if its a good fit then go for it!"
– Daniel Morgan

I always start with a gift: a no-obligation 1:1 coaching session with me. This is free of charge with no sales pitch or pressure. Just a chance for us to connect and for me to help you make a significant breakthrough. The way I see it, my coaching sells itself - you'll either love it so much you want more or you won't, either way I will just let you decide for yourself.

To apply for one of these invitation-only gifted coaching sessions, please click here to fill out the application form in full detail.
https://theinspirationallifestyle.com/lets-talk/

From there, if we want to keep working together, we can discuss whether you'd be better suited for 1:1 or group-coaching with other Nice Guys in recovery.

"Dan is all about taking action. After clinical and behavioural therapy for recovery from depression, I made huge improvements in my thought process. But Dan helped me stand up and act on the positive thought changes. The resources that I have had access to (in addition to the coaching) are of great value too. I can already feel a significant improvement in my sense of self-worth. I definitely gained more than I paid for. The added advantage is that the changes I have been able to achieve are lasting, so it is like having long-term support. "
– Pulkit

Or just keep reading and hopefully get some value from this book!

PRACTICAL TIPS

Relationship tips

In this final section we're going to cover some practical tips for specific contexts and situations, to help you in the area of your life where you might be struggling the most. We're going to talk about personal relationships, and specifically, I'm going to first talk about romantic relationships.

Deal breakers

I want to first talk about the concept of ‘deal breakers’. This is especially important for people who are starting a new relationship, but it can also be applied to people who already are in a relationship and want to make it stronger.

Deal breakers are boundaries and limits of tolerance/acceptance. In the initial stages of dating, these need to be sorted out *prior* to making a commitment. Before you get into a committed relationship of any kind, you first need to lay out what would be a deal breaker for you, and your partner needs to reveal what might be a problem for them. This means having a long, uncomfortable conversation (maybe even multiple conversations!), where you tell your partner what kind of behavior won’t ever be tolerated.

This is also a conversation in which you are honest, and you tell your partner things about yourself that they might not like. And they're allowed to do the same, safely. In fact, you must *insist* that your partner brings up anything that they think might put you off. If there's anything that comes up during that conversation that cannot be worked out or agreed upon, it’s a sign for you not to make the commitment, because you want to make sure that boundaries, limits, and past events don’t become a problem later, and you do so by dealing with it at the beginning.

No bones

The next principle is ‘no skeletons in the closet’, which means: no feelings that are left unexpressed - no deep, dark secrets - and you aim to be as honest as humanly possible. The only way a relationship can be and stay healthy, is if everything is out in the open as early as possible.

You want to create a momentum of honesty. You want to make it so that it's unusual for either of you to hold something back. In other words, you want to build a relationship in which it is weird to keep a secret. Start doing this right from the beginning. Create a momentum of honesty by being boldly honest, and through your willingness to lose the other person by being honest with them. If your partner sticks around despite you behaving in this honest way, and you can feel safe to continue being honest with them, then there's no need to slide back into the old people pleasing pretense.

You don’t have to fix it

Now, just because somebody expresses a feeling it doesn't mean that you have to do anything about it. This needs to be an agreement between you and your partner. The agreement is essentially always expressing anything that comes up, but that it doesn't always require action.

So, I can say that I'm sad, and you don't have to do anything about it. I can even say that I'm angry with your behavior, and you don't necessarily have to change that either (it could be that I am being too sensitive in that particular instance).

There needs to be resilience on both sides, where if one of you expresses an emotion, both of you know that the receiving party won’t try to “fix” it. In other words, you don't expect your partner to solve your problems. In this way, you create safety: you create a space in which you can both practise an honest expression of feelings.

Zero tolerance for tactics

You should also make it clear from the beginning that manipulation is never okay; that it cannot, and will not, be tolerated on either side. Now, this doesn't mean that an instance of dishonesty or manipulation is always going to be a deal breaker for the relationship. I mean, most people are manipulative, if nothing else because of our conditioning and programming. Many times, we can't help but bring that into a relationship.

Often, if it's in a relationship with a healthy person who's like-minded, we can heal that stuff. I still catch myself using my little Nice Guy tactics every now and then when my wife's particularly upset. The difference is that now I call it out, or she calls it out, or we both call it out, and we *neutralize* it. We don't allow it to influence our relationship in any way.

You need an ongoing agreement with your partner that if either of you behaves in any people pleasing, manipulative or unhealthy way - in the way that you used to behave with previous partners - both of you have the permission to call it out, and the other person must respond accordingly.

Make the effort

Another principle that you should implement is: *honesty over comfort.* You're going to be constantly tempted to take the easy way out, which is usually through silence or dishonesty. And it will seem that you are just ignoring the “little” things.

“Yeah, I don't need the hassle of a big argument about this little thing. There's no point in being honest about that. It's not that big of a deal.”

I want you to remember: it's *always* a big deal, because each time you remain silent, you create a wedge that opens the door to more dishonesty and distance. Even if this current topic isn't a big deal, you've now created a lie that you have to maintain, and that will likely cause you to

need other lies to maintain that first lie. It's not long before you're in a world of lies. This is how it begins.

So, no matter how uncomfortable and inappropriate it is to say, and regardless of the bad timing of your honesty, and no matter how “small” it is, it's got to come out. Again, your partner does not have to do anything about it. *This isn't a problem to be solved*. It's just a feeling to be expressed. It's just a belief or an opinion.

See it through

When you get into rough conversations - honest, difficult, uncomfortable conversations - *persevere*. Don't back down and run away like you usually do. Don't try to make it light-hearted with humor all the time, like you usually do (or whatever it is you do to avoid intimacy and uncomfortable confrontations). See it through to the end, even if it takes you hours and you finish your conversation in the early hours of the morning.

Get to the conclusion of the conversation. You might need to have multiple conversations. Maybe you’ll get interrupted by the kids, or maybe you come to a disagreement that you can't get past, or one of you gets blocked emotionally - just come back to it tomorrow. But keep hacking away at it until the job is done. It's less effort in the long run.

Let your partner suffer. Let them experience their emotions and their struggles. They don't have to do it alone - you don't have to run away from them while they're struggling. You can be right there, next to them and you can put your arm around them, comfort them, or whisper words of encouragement, but *do not solve their problem for them*.

No heroics

Do not try to anticipate and prevent emotions from happening. You only weaken your partner with this manipulation. The only way they're going to be able to deal with their problems is if they have those problems and are forced to deal with them! If you take those problems away, you make them fragile. Stop doing that.

You are not a hero, and you are certainly not *their* hero (even if they ask you to be). You're not the white knight that is coming in to rescue them. You're their *partner*: you're *beside* them, you're with them as they work on their stuff, but you're not doing the work for them. Always keep that in mind, and do not try to be their coach, do not try to be their counselor, do not try to be their parent, and certainly don't allow it to come the other way either. They are not here to rescue you.

Lead and initiate

Take the initiative simply by being honest about what you want, what you desire, and what you dislike. If you have an idea about something you'd like to do, just say you have an idea. If you have an urge of a sexual nature, just mention that you've got the urge.

Constantly initiate the discussion by just sharing what you're feeling, what your ideas are, and what you're interested in. Don't let the likelihood of rejection stop you. How likely they are to respond positively or negatively should not be a factor in your decision making. Say it anyway.

Get your priorities straight

You have to consider another key principle: treat your partner and your children *better* than you treat anyone else. It's quite often the case in the Nice Guy world that the people closest to the Nice Guys get the worst treatment, and complete strangers get the best performance. You want to switch that around. If someone doesn't know you very well, they shouldn't get the best from you, and someone who's close to you, supporting you, encouraging you, being there for you, and all the time loving you, should get the best of you. You should be reserving your best energy for them.

This does not mean you should start people pleasing your loved ones. What it means is that if you're stuck with a dilemma of either pleasing your boss, or going home to spend time with your kids (and disappointing the boss), you choose your kids over your boss. Your boss is lower in the hierarchy. Too bad for him.

If your extended family is trying to separate you from your partner, if they're getting in between, your family is going to need a little telling off. If, for example, your mother puts down your partner at the family dinner table, you stand up for your partner. And if your mother doesn't stop, you must leave to protect your partner and your children because *they're the family that you chose.*

Parenting

Finally, when it comes to parenting, particularly discipline, you've got to ask yourself constantly: “Is what I'm doing really in my child's best long term interest? Or is it just about my own personal convenience and emotional comfort?” Because doing the right thing for your kids, for their best long term survival with or without you, is often the thing you're less comfortable with.

It means taking more time and being patient to comfort them through their emotional tantrums. It means letting them explore hobbies that are a hassle and that you're not really sure of. It means allowing them to go and explore the world, to live their life and get into a bit of trouble, and cross some boundaries as they learn.

You're gonna have to make extra time and effort to work with them the right way through that stuff. If you just try to control them and manipulate them into being something that you prefer, you're only damaging them. You know this because it was done to you. Break the cycle.

Friendship tips

In this practical tips section, we're going to focus on friendships, social circle, and family. There is a Nice Guy Recovery belief that you need to adopt when it comes to socializing, and that is: *it's better to be alone and genuine, than popular and fake.*

5 vs 100

Let's say that you got two choices:

a) You can have 100 people who just *like* you, but you have to put effort into it, and perform, and make them like you.
b) Or you can have just 5 people as friends, but they *love* you for *who you are*. No matter how you feel, no matter what mood you're in, you never have to try and you never have to perform. They love everything about you.

Ask yourself this question: which one would you choose, a hundred people or just five real friends? *Because you can't have both*. This section is about behaving in a way that gets you those five real friends. So, if you want those hundred people to like you, this section isn't going to help you.

Polarizing honesty

Generally, what people pleasers and Nice Guys try to do is use dishonesty and avoidance to push everyone from "loving" or "hating" them over into the more moderate position of "liking". We try to make everybody like us.

The recovery principle is to filter and *polarize* everyone to the extreme edges, making them either love you or hate you. Don't allow any kind of moderate feelings about you to exist. Use your honesty to polarize, and use rejection to choose your social circle. You let other people reject you because they don't like the real you, and let yourself reject other people because they're not a good fit for you. Whoever's left standing is the right person for you.

You have to speak out, be opinionated, let your judgments be known. Let your views of the world be known. Do what you want to do, be the person you want to be, and let everybody just react to it, regardless of how they're going to feel about you. There are going to be people who react positively to you and encourage you to be your most authentic self, and people who only seem to like you if you perform for them, and it's up to you to figure out who is the best fit.

Liking doesn't mean good fit

You've got to be very careful as to which one of those you're going to keep in your life. Just because someone likes you it does not mean that you have to like them back, or that they are good for you.

If someone really likes you and you really like them, and together you make both of your lives better, that's the kind of friend we're looking for. And that kind of relationship is worth putting a bit of time and effort into, because if you create that top five inner circle of close friends, they're probably going to be your friends for the rest of your life. So, you don't need to rush this.

Create balanced relationships

You have to carefully measure the balance in your relationships, because people pleasers and Nice Guys often create relationships that are quite imbalanced. Usually, we're the ones doing all the work and over-investing, and they're the ones sitting back and enjoying the ride. Though, it can be the other way around. If you have an *avoidant attachment style*, maybe they're the ones pursuing you, and you hold back and don't let people get close.

A healthy relationship is more like 50/50 in terms of effort and intimacy. Maybe you generally lead and they follow, or vice versa - there might be certain dynamics that work for you both - but the efforts, the energy, the enthusiasm, the encouragement, and the love, should feel about 50/50. Things should balance themselves out over the time that you've known each other.

So, if any of your current friendships or relationships feel imbalanced, you need to confront this directly. Speak with the person and tell them that your relationship feels unbalanced. Tell them that it feels like you're doing all the work to keep the friendship going, or whatever it is. Then, once you've had that confrontation, see if they change. If they change for the better, and they meet you halfway, you can recreate a good friendship. Excellent. Keep that friend. But if they're reluctant or resistant or defensive or avoidant, it's time to let that person go.

Weeding the garden

Some of you may need to let go of a *lot* of people. I certainly did in my transition, and it was hard to do. But I don't miss any of those people now, they were never actually right for me. If being with someone makes you feel drained or you feel forced to be fake or you don't feel safe to be honest, let them go. If it doesn't feel right to be with someone, if you need to perform, it's time to cut that person loose or at least confront them and give them a chance to make it easier to be with them.

But generally, you'll know that you're in a good-fit relationship or friendship when it feels *effortless*. You don't have to be anything beyond being your authentic self. When the interactions with that person are over, you feel better about life, not worse.

So in general, the more free you are to be yourself with someone, the more time you should spend with them. Assuming that you also like this person, and you don't have to try at all to be anything other than yourself, and you both love each other.

How to meet people and make new friends

Now, let’s talk about this in practical terms: creating these friendships and bringing these people into your life.

It's actually simple and relatively effortless: *pack your calendar full of activities that you love to do*.

Hobbies, classes, entertainment, whatever it is, fill up all of your free time with social activities that you love to do, and when you go there, go there for that particular activity. So, you might go to a concert to listen to a band, you might go to a class to learn how to dance, you might go to the market to buy some fresh produce - you're doing all these things for *you*.

But in order to help your social life, while you're there doing these things, also introduce yourself to people. That's it. It's as simple as going up to someone and saying: “I don't think I've met you yet. I have seen you here before. Hi, my name is Dan.”, and that's it. That's the only real effort you make.

Now, if that conversation evolves naturally, if it goes well and you really like the person who seems to be a good fit, then invite them out for a coffee, invite them to the part of your life outside of that particular event. But that's about it. That's about all the effort you need to put in.

Getting your WHY right

The reason why you should do the things that you love is because then you can enjoy being by yourself, and you're living by your values in doing something you love.

But, this is also because here is where *your* kind of people are likely to hang out. You're cutting the search down, you're making it easier to find your kind of people, rather than just randomly selecting people out of the public, or from the workplace, where there's no real reason why you guys would be a good fit. In this case, you're doing the things you love, and they love those things, too, so there’s a good chance you're going to be a good fit. And that's it.

Essentially, you're trying to live a life that is satisfying all on your own. But, you're also putting just a little bit of effort into meeting people and inviting them into your life. If you like them, you're leading a little bit, and then allowing them the chance to follow. And that's it. That's all the effort you put in.

Persistence

If you do this consistently, for many years, you will form an excellent, high-quality social circle. As long as you combine these tips with what we talked about earlier, with weeding the garden and getting rid of anyone who's unhealthy, you will create a high quality social circle.

You have to get comfortable with rejecting people who are a bad fit or too much effort. If you feel unsafe to be real with them, it’s time to let them go, and this does not have to be a big conflict. You just don't call them back or you just tell them: “Look, we're not right for each other. Best of luck!”, and you just move on with your life.

Workplace tips

In this chapter we're going to talk about tips for the workplace.

David

I'll start by sharing a story about a guy named David, a friend of mine whom I met when I was working at the Department of Corrections (a government department of the Ministry of Justice).

This was one of the first guys I've ever met who was exactly the same with everyone, no matter where you saw him. He was the same at work as he was out fishing. Whether he was in the pub, with his family or at a funeral, you got just one David. I'd seen him in all these situations, and in all of them he had been the same guy who spoke the same, acted the same, had the same sense of humor.

The reason I bring this up is because he was the first of a few examples that helped me break a limiting belief that I had: namely, that you must be different, aka “professional”, in the workplace. I had a different persona for every situation, including *multiple* personas for the workplace, so David was a revelation to me.

Professionalism

This “you must be professional” belief is simply not true. If, like David, you can get away with being genuine and in some ways “unprofessional” in a government department that's heavily scrutinized by the media, then you can get away with it *anywhere*.

The only way to get away with being genuine is by not being ashamed of it. I want to plant a seed in your mind at a deeper level: being yourself *can* be done successfully without much risk in almost any job, or at least any job that's right for you. The idea of professionalism and the belief that one needs to be a weird, robotic-like actor in order to fit into the workplace, is a limiting belief. It's not true and it's actually holding you back in your career.

You’re on your own

I want to share with you an insight: nobody cares about your career as much as you do.

This was a very helpful piece of advice that I received at the beginning of my career in the Department of Corrections. It was a wake-up call regarding my people pleasing in the workplace.

All the Nice Guy things that I was doing were partly to serve the aim of helping my career. I thought that if I please all the right people, they will want to reciprocate in some way, should I need them when my career development requires support.

But, what this insight helped me realize was that these people are all busy focusing on their own careers, not mine. Nobody cares about my career development as much as I do, not even close. Not even the really kind boss, or that really helpful associate.

You have to keep that in mind when it comes to developing your career, you've got to put yourself first, and this doesn't mean that you have to crush other people and be selfish. You just gotta let go of the idea that someone else is going to do this for you. You've got to do it for you. And that means taking care of yourself.

So let's talk about some of the ways that you play out this belief, and let’s help you recover from Nice Guy syndrome at the office.

Say No more often

One of the tips is very simple. Say “no” more often than you say “yes”. It's the opposite of what we were taught. We're taught to say “yes” all the time. We're taught to agree and to do everything that our boss says to do, to be a good little worker and that, as a result, we will rise up through the company and through our career. It's simply not true.

Any of the top most successful entrepreneurs in the world will tell you that saying “no” is one of the key elements to success. You should only be saying “yes” to the things that support your career goals. You should say “no” to anything that doesn’t support your career goals, which includes: saying “no” to your boss’s request for unpaid overtime; “no” to that attractive coworker that you've got a crush on asking you to finish their report for them; and “no” to a client who complains a lot and wastes your time.

It means that you only say “yes” to something that serves your dream and the grand goal. You have a picture of what you want to do with your life, your vocation, the work that gives you great passion. Every single suggestion or command or instruction should be viewed with the filter of these two questions: Does this serve the goal? Does this take me closer to it? If the answer is “no”, then *your* answer is “no” to whichever offer or request has been presented to you.

Status is an illusion

There's also another myth that holds Nice Guys back in the workplace, and that is *status*. In particular, the idea that people higher above you in the hierarchy are somehow better people who deserve different treatment. Most people are kinder to their CEO than they are to the janitor in the building. That's typical of Nice Guy and people pleasing preferential treatment.

We think they need to be really nice to certain people because they might have a high impact on our careers, so people pleasers are always adjusting and being fake in the presence of “higher” status. This kind of behavior is very manipulative, and very materialistic. And also just very inhumane.

If you want to be confident, you must treat everyone as equals. They're all just human beings. They are just primates. I don't care if they're wearing a suit and tie. I don't care how much they get paid. It's still just a skeleton, covered in flesh and skin. It doesn't matter what their title is. It doesn't matter what everybody else thinks of them or how they treat them in terms of their status. You must see them as *your peers*, nothing more, nothing less.

No preferential treatment for those “above” you and no derogatory treatment to those “below”. There is no above and no below, these are just people. Ironically, if you treat them as your equals, you're more likely to rise up. You're more likely to be respected by those above you if you look them in the eye rather than kiss their ass, and you’re more likely to be revered and followed by those below you if you show them empathy rather than disdain.

Practice confrontations

Workplaces are also a great place to practice confrontations, because you're chucked into an environment with people you probably didn't choose to work with and there are going to be differences of opinion. Plus, your income is largely dependent on other people wanting you to do things, and some of these things are going to compromise your values, or even compromise the contract that you signed.

You must have regular confrontations to protect and progress your career. If you've been comfortable and easygoing in your career for a long period of time, that means that you're taking a lot of crap from people and probably not moving forward. I guarantee that you're compromising yourself if you haven't had a confrontation within the last couple of weeks (or you're working with the best people ever who want to serve your values, which is unlikely).

Stand your ground, even on petty issues, no matter how small, no matter how unimportant it is to the project. You're here to recover from Nice Guy Syndrome; *that's* your priority here, at least for now. Every confrontation is an opportunity to build your resilience, to build that tough skin, to develop better communication skills, to practise letting go of being a Nice Guy and start being honest.

You don't have to start a big fight. This doesn't have to be a conflict. Just stand up for what you believe in. Even if you lose and you get voted down, that's fine. You're not here to win it. You are here to stand up. That's the bit that matters.

Say goodbye to being professional

Start to slowly remove “professionalism”, and all that weird extra stuff you do when you enter into the workplace. This could even mean dressing more casually, if your contract allows it. But generally, it means changing your language. Stop using workplace acronyms. Stop using cliches, stop speaking in scripted phrases and classic workplace talk. Listen to the way you talk in the workplace and ask yourself on a regular basis: “Is this how I talk at home? Is this how I talk with my friends?”

There's nothing particularly wrong with cutting back on how often you use slang and swear words, but there is a slippery slope to becoming fake. The David guy I mentioned before swore all the time in the workplace. In a government agency! He knew when not to do it, for example if he was with a client or he was with the Minister or whatever, he might dial it back there. But still, it was always very clear that he was not being fake.

Professionalism is fake. Nobody's like that in real life. It's a manufactured thing. If you want to recover from Nice Guy Syndrome, you gotta stop doing it.

I recommend getting a pen and a piece of paper out, and writing down all the things you do differently at work under the banner of *professionalism*. Then ask yourself: what would it look like to stop doing that stuff, if you wanted to get really bold, if you want to end up in a really satisfying passionate career that you're excited about?

Honesty *is* job security… in the long term

Then you're going to have to step up bravely. The way to do that is to *prioritize honesty over job security.* Look at it this way: the mindset of a confident person is: "If being honest will get me fired, then I'm going to get fired". Because the thing is, if this job is *right* for you, if this career path is right for you, if this company's right for you, then you being honest won't get you fired.

Honesty supports an ideal career if you're in the right place, and if it fits and aligns with you. So if you have to adjust your honesty to stay at your workplace, you're in the wrong job. At the very least, the people there don't support you.

But more likely - and I've done a lot of career work with my clients - you are in the wrong field entirely. My clients are often nowhere near where they should be. They're working in advertising when they should be a chef. They're working in insurance when they should be a podcaster. They are so often miles away because they stuck with something that was familiar, something that they were good at, and something they got approval for, instead of something that was genuine and something that they were passionate about.

Honesty will help you move from one job to another, but it could be a painful transition. You might even want to save up a bit of cash in preparation for being more honest, just in case you go for a couple of weeks without a job. Don't panic about it! There's a really high chance that you're good at getting jobs, and you are just freaking yourself out by catastrophizing. I'm sure if you get fired for being honest, you'll have no problem finding more work. You ending up homeless on the streets is so unlikely it's not even worth considering.

Management

If you're a manager, rather than trying to look like a good person all the time, delegate and give the glory to the others, and lead from behind. What that means is: your team are the stars of the show, and you're like the hidden puppet-master behind the show.

You don't try to get any of the credit; you're making sure that *they're* the stars. You're promoting them, you're encouraging them, you're coaching them to be the best that they can be, and you encourage them to enjoy their job as much as they possibly can.

Imagine that you own the company and you want the company to do well, rather than for it to make you look good. Be *that* kind of manager.

The truth hurts

As you might have already guessed, you need to start preparing mentally for uncomfortable revelations that might occur. If you start having integrity, bravery, and honesty in the workplace, you might discover that at the very least, the specific place you're working at isn't right for you. But, more painfully, you might discover you're totally on the wrong track altogether, that you shouldn't be here, that you are not doing the thing you're supposed to be doing.

I have total faith that you can do the thing you're supposed to be doing. I mean, look at me: I make money just talking honestly for a living. That's all I do. Really. That's how viable any career idea really is, no matter how far-fetched it might seem.

You've been conditioned and programmed to believe that a very small, specific subset of skills are all you're able to do to have a viable career. There are people out there who make money for just making eye contact. Look at YouTube, there are people who make money by just filming themselves reacting to music videos. *Anything* can make you money if you're brave, committed, and willing to learn to let go of the idea that your career must be something that you don't enjoy - a 9-to-5 that you hate but tolerate because you “need the money”.

A truly confident, bold, non people pleaser is prepared to make a little sacrifice right now, to get uncomfortable, in order to find the thing that they're supposed to do with the only life that they've got.

The *benefits* of being a people pleaser

In this chapter, we're going to look at the *benefits* of being a people pleaser. Now, this doesn't mean that it's good to be a people pleaser! What it means is that you've been doing something your entire life that has given you skills, training, and knowledge that can actually be put to good use.

While people pleasing in itself is harmful, the abilities and the practice of people pleasing can actually be beneficial once you remove all of the insecurity and neediness. One of the reasons why I'm so effective as a coach, and successful in this industry, is because I spent most of my life being a Nice Guy. That afforded me the development of certain gifts and abilities that I can now use to help people change their lives for the better.

In this chapter, I'll talk about some of those benefits of pleasing people, and you might identify that you have some of these skills yourself. This chapter will help you to understand that being a people pleaser hasn't been a total waste of time, and that you have been working on something that is going to be beneficial to you. This will also help you to forgive yourself: you haven't been *all* bad - you've been trying to do the right thing, just with a bad methodology.

Empathy

Empathy is a superior ability to read people, feel what they're feeling, and understand their experience. It's actually a brilliant social skill in terms of being a leader, being a coach, or any other profession that needs you to connect well with people.

So far, as Nice Guys, we've used this skill for the wrong purposes. We developed empathy because we were always hypervigilant to the way that people feel about us, and we were trying to protect ourselves from social risks. We got really good at reading people to make sure that nothing bad happens to us. We had to be good at it. If we got it wrong, we got ostracized, we got bullied and punished in some way. So, we did get good at it. At least many of us did.

There are some types of Nice Guys who never develop this ability. But for those of you who did develop empathy, I want you to think about the possible healthy social application for this skill. You are often right in your guesses about how people feel. You are really good at reading a room, and understanding the dynamics between people you know. When somebody is offending everyone and they don't realize that they're doing it, you can feel it.

These are valuable insights and skills that are second-nature to you. You're used to them. But other people don't have this ability.

Sympathy for the victims and underdogs

As Nice Guys, we tend to see ourselves as victims. We see ourselves as underdogs. We see ourselves as having received an unfair disadvantage in life. This has given us sympathy for others who are like this.

This can help us in working environments where we can have great sympathy for people who have been bullied or treated in any unfair way. Having this superpower allows us to connect with people, and often, we can become leaders who run support groups, rehab, or coaching.

Social problem solving

While a lot of our current sympathy might be controlling, and coming from a really unhealthy place, we are actually quite good at it. So, when we focus on the right problem - something that we can and should control - we're pretty good at fixing it.

Now, we've been doing it for the wrong reasons. We've been doing that because we need emotional familiarity all the time. But this is why so many Nice Guys actually flourish in their careers as well. They are good at their jobs because they cannot let a problem go unsolved. You can see how easily this could be redirected into a healthier purpose.

For example, you could try to start an entrepreneurial career that is true to your core values. That's a problem you could solve. It's a hard problem to solve, but you've been problem solving your entire life, definitely more than others.

Enduring long-term emotional suffering

Nice Guy Syndrome is essentially a form of complex trauma. It comes from a lot of pain and suffering. We go through a lot of pain and suffering in order to keep up the mask, and to keep up the act.

One of the great ironies about Nice Guy Syndrome is that in our effort to create an emotionally comfortable life we have to be emotionally uncomfortable *all the time*. We're constantly worried and anxious. We're constantly frustrated. We're constantly confused. We're constantly angry. We're constantly depressed from trying to keep everybody happy, and trying to look like we're happy all the time. So, we're actually pretty good at taking pain.

I remember being quite surprised when I came to realize that I'm not as “soft” as I've always thought myself to be because I've been suffering nonstop behind the scenes, where no one can see, for almost my entire life. I’ve had very few moments of genuine pleasure that weren't hedonistic.

So, if you're *that* tough, imagine what you could do! Imagine how much you can handle. Again, I use the example of somebody starting their own business since it requires a lot of endurance

and emotional discomfort to do that. That's why almost nobody does it, but *you* could handle it. It's going to be no different to how you've been living so far.

You get it

When you stop worrying so much about yourself - your own status and seeking approval from others - you'll realize that you have a superpower: a psychological ability to understand people. You've been so busy reading people and trying to understand the dynamics of social interaction your entire life. You've been so worried about how that will affect you that you've actually been training as a psychologist, or perhaps, as a leader or an influencer.

You might be really manipulative for all the wrong reasons, but when you apply healthy reasoning to it, you're just very influential and helpful. A powerful leader, a coach. You probably understand the human mind and social interaction better than most. In fact, better than a lot of fully trained psychologists and psychiatrists.

I learned this while working with prisoners. There are lifetime criminals who have never achieved a formal psychological qualification in their life, and yet they understand the human mind better than any trained psychologist or psychiatrist that I've ever met or heard of, because they've learned it on the streets.

Well, as Nice Guys, we learned it on "the streets", too. We didn't have textbooks; we didn't have videos; we didn't have courses. We had real life interactions that we *had* to get right. So we got good at it, out on the streets. We learned it in a way it *actually* works. You have applied psychological superpowers. And if you could just get over your own fears about yourself and look out into the world, you would see how good you are at this.

You're ready to lead

You have the ability to understand people deeply. You have the ability to connect deeply with almost anyone by simply having boldness and vulnerability. You can be the one who makes it ok to talk about anything and who gives the permission to be honest, to drop the mask. People are going to love you for it because they never get to do that.

You have great insight. You have a great understanding from your own inner experience of how insecurities and limiting beliefs drive behavior. You have very intimate knowledge about how having the wrong belief about the world, or being afraid of things that aren't dangerous, can completely determine how you act and completely rule your life.

That's very valuable information and very insightful. As humans, we aren't all that different. We all have the same basic structure, psychologically and physically speaking. So, if you can understand how insecurity drives *your* behavior, you basically understand how it works for other people as well.

Think of the applications. Think of how valuable that information is. Underneath the neediness that drives a lot of your people pleasing behavior is a genuine love for people (most of the time). Most of the niceness of people pleasers comes from a compassionate place. We don't want other people to suffer, it hurts us to see it. We are not just obsessed with our own benefits. We want people to have good lives. We want people to be nice to each other. We want the world to be a good place to live. That's genuine.

It was because of difficult circumstances that we turned into a needy person trying to get approval for ourselves. There's nothing wrong with being compassionate; with caring for other people. If you can remove your neediness, you can actually be far more generous and helpful than you've ever been before, because you won't be doing it just to get something for yourself anymore. You'll be doing it to *give*, and that's far more powerful than just trying to score points.

You have easy access to a potential life mission

I think that the easiest way to figure out your mission in life is by asking yourself: “What is the biggest problem that I’ve ever had to overcome?” and then help other people overcome it, too.

I have a friend who was manipulated into joining a cult. He got out of that and now he runs support groups for people who have escaped cults. He's found his purpose, he's found a thing that brings him great meaning in life. He rescues people who are *like him*.

And that is, in my opinion, the most direct path to a satisfying career, and just activities in general, that you will probably enjoy. When you work on this Nice Guy stuff, when you overcome it yourself, your next question can be: “How can I help someone else to do it in an even quicker manner than I did?” You will find great satisfaction in being the person that could have helped you while you were suffering.

The simplest path to a meaningful vocation: Become the person you needed when you struggled the most.

Top 3 tips for a quick recovery

We've covered quite a lot in this book, too much to remember, frankly, so I wanted to create a section right at the end that gives you the quickest shortcut to work on Nice Guy Syndrome.

There are certain behaviors that you can practise in everyday life, and these will guarantee recovery from Nice Guy Syndrome since it's just not possible to simultaneously be a people pleaser and do these things. You're either going to be a Nice Guy or a confident person, and these behaviors will help you switch from one to the other. So, if you want to make this a really refined simple practice, these are my three top tips.

#1: Always express your preferences

We talked about this one, remember the 51% rule? Never stop on being unsure about something. Never say that you're fine with whatever happens. Always make a choice. Always commit to a side of an argument. Always lean one way or the other.

Whenever anything comes up about what you want or don't want, like or dislike, always make a choice. It doesn't matter how small and petty the preference might be. It might be as small as where somebody keeps the office stapler, or as big as whether or not you're going to move to another country with your partner.

Always be honest about what you'd prefer. If you're really unsure, just pick a side anyway. Nice Guys like to stay in the "maybe" zone in order to feel safe. We're not really committed to anything controversial. Stay out of that "maybe" space. Always commit and stick to something, unless better evidence changes your mind. Never just go with something because everybody else likes it.

#2: Look for the least comfortable option

When you're going about your day, and there are various ways to get all your tasks done, various conversations to be had, and various things to do, try to look for the way that's going to challenge you the most.

It could literally be a physical challenge, like going to the gym and choosing the most awkward machine that you've never used before, or choosing the exercise that you struggle with the most. Or it could be, when you get to work, thinking: "What's the least comfortable conversation I need to have?", and then go and have that conversation first.

Maybe it's the activity that's the least comfortable. Maybe there's a phone call that you need to make. You could just sit quietly with your wife and watch TV, or you could bring up the thing that she annoyed you with earlier in the day. Always look for that uncomfortable option.

You're going to be uncomfortable all the time anyway, that's people pleaser life. So, make sure it's a *chosen* discomfort. Make sure it's a *helpful* discomfort. Choose the thing that's going to allow you to grow the most.

Think of it as you chasing fear, rather than being chased by it. You're looking for it and trying to overcome it whenever it comes up. As soon as you see something that makes you hesitate, even a little bit, think “Oh, I've got to go do that now!” Even if it seems pointless and doesn't serve the grand goal, go and do it *just because it's uncomfortable*.

This doesn't have to be a lifetime commitment. With just a few months of doing this you're going to realize a couple of things. One, you *can* handle discomfort, it's nowhere near as bad as you think it is. And two, you're way more capable than you give yourself credit for.

#3: Reflective activity–journaling

Every single day, you should be journaling, and by journaling I don't mean writing something like: “Dear Diary, Kevin was mean to me today”. I mean, reviewing your behavior for the day and judging it. Making assessments and, in your case, assessing your people pleasing behaviors, or your new breakthrough recovery behaviors, or both.

Have a look at how you behaved that day and make genuine, honest, assessments. Nobody else is going to read this. “That was people pleasing; that was honest; I'm not sure about that, so it’s probably a bit dodgy. I'm really proud of this” etc.. Just start to become more self aware of how you are being, compared to how you want to be.

Then slowly close that gap just through awareness. You'll be amazed at how much journaling triggers you to change your behavior. You'll be complaining in your journal: “I did it again. I did it again! I was such a coward!” And then, finally, an opportunity will come up and you'll be able to say: “The thing I always complain about in my journal, I'm not going to do that again”. And you'll change your behavior.

So the three top tips are:

1. Always express your preferences.
2. Always choose the least comfortable option.
3. Always journal and reflect.

If you can practise these three, you don't need to remember anything else from this book.

Forgiving yourself for being a Nice Guy

We are coming to the end of this book and I've given you everything you need. I'm certain of that, since I've been working with Nice Guys in their recovery for many years now. I'm also in recovery myself. I know what works and what doesn't.

Take action

The biggest issue you're gonna have with this book is the same issue you've had your entire life: it's all about whether or not you take action, whether or not you change your behavior and do things that you're unfamiliar and uncomfortable with in order to change your life. If you don't do that, then *this book can't help you.*

The *information* doesn't help you. All it does is put more pressure on you to know what to do. If you put the insights that I have shared with you into action, it will help you. I'm sure of it, I can guarantee that. But if you don't take action, the knowledge from this book can't help you.

Grief

You may be, at this point, looking back over your life, especially if you have started taking transformative steps, and you may have some regrets. There may be some grief for a life that you missed out on.

I remember going through this specific phase in my journey, where I realized - after being honest for a while - how much of my life I had lost through dishonesty. I realized how many opportunities have passed me by, how far behind I was, and what I could have been.

I kept catching myself thinking that I could have been this amazing person by now, but I'd frittered it all away trying to get approval from other people. I was angry at myself; angry at my past self for letting me down, for leaving me in this position where I'm having to catch up and start over again in my 30s.

You only know what you know

I want to talk about the idea that you could not have gotten where you are today any quicker than you did. And it's great that you have arrived at these conclusions now. There's an old Chinese proverb which says: "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is today".

Guilt, resentment, regret, anger - all of these emotions that you feel about yourself - they are misdirected. You don't deserve it. It's a misfire of the brain. It's based on a limiting belief that the past could have gone differently. It's simply not true.

You've always behaved to the best of your ability since the day you were born. You've always strived to do the best that you know how. The limit of knowledge of your past self isn't your fault. You can only know what you know, there's nothing you can do about that, other than seek more information, which has brought you here. So you've done everything you can do.

Every opportunity that you missed may look like a failure or something that you should be ashamed of, but that was all you could do at the time. That was the limit of your problem solving ability. It was the limit of your courage. It was the limit of your integrity at that moment.

Children try their best

You've got to remember, Nice Guy Syndrome and people pleasing is the development of a strategy that *a child* made up. The stuff that traumatized us into these behaviors happened when we were very young. The human brain doesn't even finish developing until we're in our 20s, and we were coming up with all of these strategies before the age of five.

Did you know that most of the strategies that you developed were probably because of stuff that happened to you *before you were three years old*? Maybe you were told off for crying, maybe somebody was always stressed out and angry at home and you felt like you had to fix it. Stuff you don't even remember. All of these strategies started to form from day one, the moment that you became aware of your environment and started asking yourself: "How do I make it feel safer?".

At the time of writing this, I have a one year old daughter. I can already see how she is figuring out how to make people happier, she is already learning. I hope to stop her becoming a full time people pleaser, but I can see that she's trying to figure out how to make the environment feel safer for her and how she is trying to figure out how to make everyone feel happy.

Nice Guy Syndrome is a protective strategy. There were things that were hurting you when you were a child, and that child did the best that it could to protect itself, that is to say, your past self did everything it could to protect *you*.

The reason you're in the position that you are in now, to read this entire book, right to the end, and hopefully take the actions needed to improve your life even more, is because you're standing on the shoulders of your past self. Your past self took all the hits. Your past self went through all the trials and tribulations, your past self suffered for you, only so that you could be angry at and disappointed with your past self in this present moment?

Your past self deserves more respect. It held you up, it's holding you up now. Of course, you can see now with hindsight that your past self did everything wrong, but at the time your past self thought that it was doing everything right. How can you be upset with someone who, at the time, could not have known better? That someone is your past self.

Arrested development

“Arrested development” is a psychological term that describes how emotional development can stop at a certain age, prematurely. For most Nice Guys and people pleasers, we're talking about early teens. At some point, our people pleasing strategy finally worked as best as it was ever going to. So, we just stopped developing. We just got stopped here. We're 13 year olds in 40 year old bodies, all pretending that we've grown up.

Everywhere you look, you can see all these adults, with their suits and ties, and all their professionalism and their gym routines and their mortgages and their kids. They all look like adults, but many of them are not. A vast majority of the people you see have arrested development. They adopted strategies that made them feel safe when they were younger, and they haven't moved on ever since.

At least *you* are trying to move on. You're trying to actually mature into an adult. You can't do anything about the fact that your development was arrested, but you can release it from prison. Now it's time to start getting things moving again, to start developing more and transition from child-stage or teenager-stage into adulthood.

RIP Past self

So your past self was trying to protect you, it did the best it knew how in the moment. And now it's time to put your old self to rest. It's done. The strategy no longer works. It's time to file it away in the memories cabinet and develop a new strategy for living, hopefully with integrity, courage and bravery. When you were not being yourself, but instead tried to make people like you, that was a strategy that got you here, it kept you alive, you survived. And it's time to put it to rest.

Rather than looking at your past self as someone who held you back, think of it as the vehicle that got you here and now you're going to leave that vehicle behind and drive off in a brand new car.

Next steps

Congratulations on getting all the way through to the end of this book! There are not many people who do that, so you're something special.

Now, should you wish so, the very next step is for you to put the tips from this book into action. I know that reading books *feels* good. It feels like all that wisdom is staying in your mind. However, what I teach has to be experimented with and practiced in real life in order for you to see the results that you're looking for. It's as simple as that.

Make sure that you write down and commit to a single action that you're going to go into within the next 24 hours.

I also have a special reward for you, a free gift for all of you who read all the way to this very last page. If you email me at dan@brojo.org I'll send you through the gift.

Also, if you enjoyed what's in this book and you would like to become a part of the community, gain support and talk more about self-improvement, and gain access to great resources on integrity, self-confidence, social skills, and so on, come and join us at www.brojo.org. You can join for free, meet the rest of the community, and get access to our massive resource library.

For those of you who, while reading this book, thought: “Wow, it would be awesome if Dan was actually helping me with this stuff!”, you can apply for a one to one free coaching session. I can work with you and help you make massive breakthroughs!

Also, check out our YouTube channel and podcast. There are tons of great free resources there.

Finally, let me know how I could improve. I constantly come back to my books and make upgrades and adjustments. I'm always looking to make them better. So let me know how I could do that. I am looking forward to hearing from you and helping you become a high-confidence person who lives with integrity.